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MAGAZINE

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MAY/JUNE 2015
VOLUME 12 ISSUE 4

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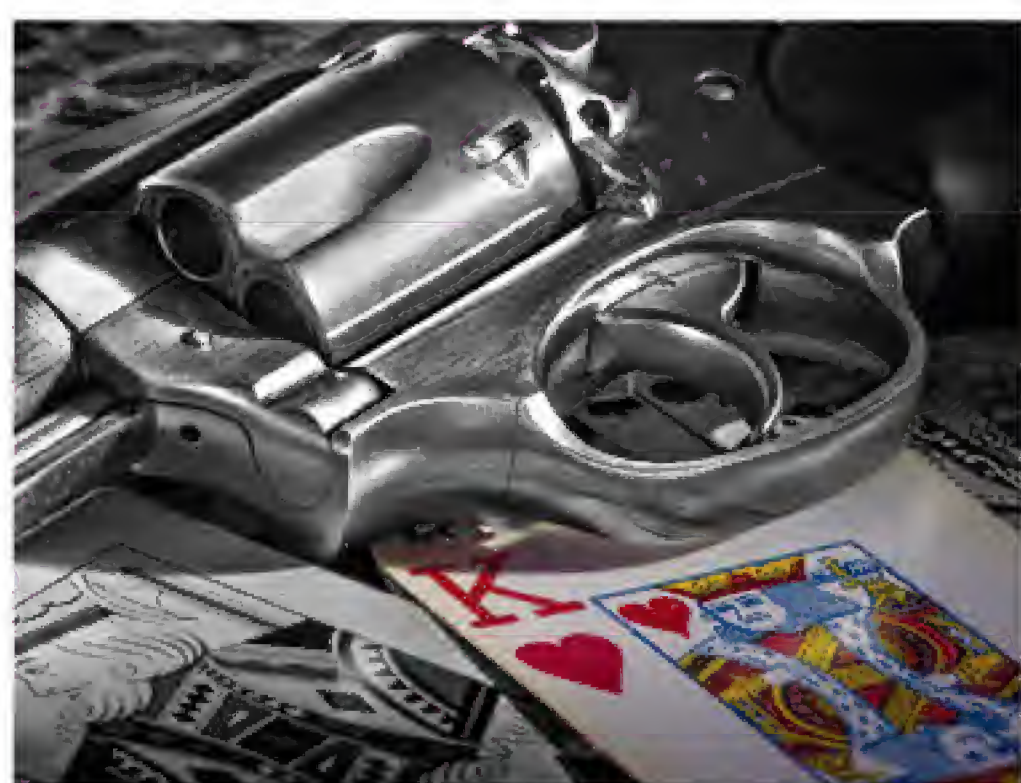
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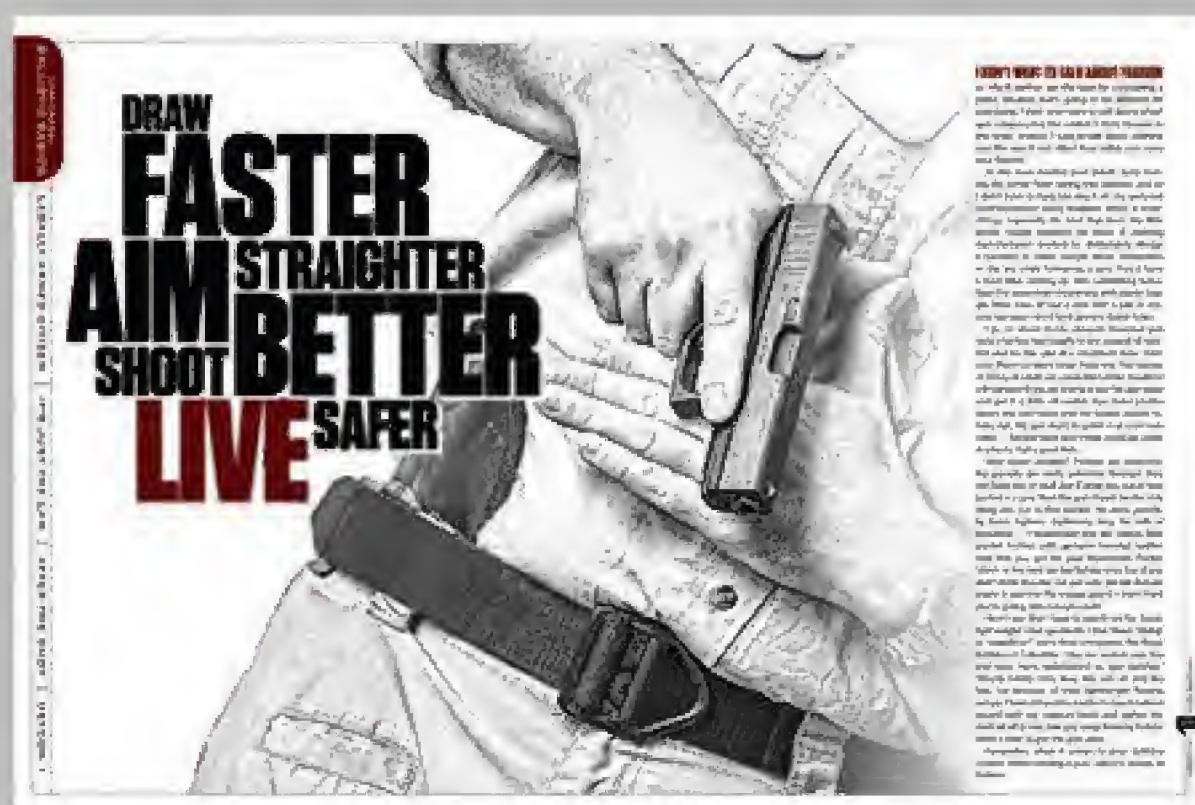
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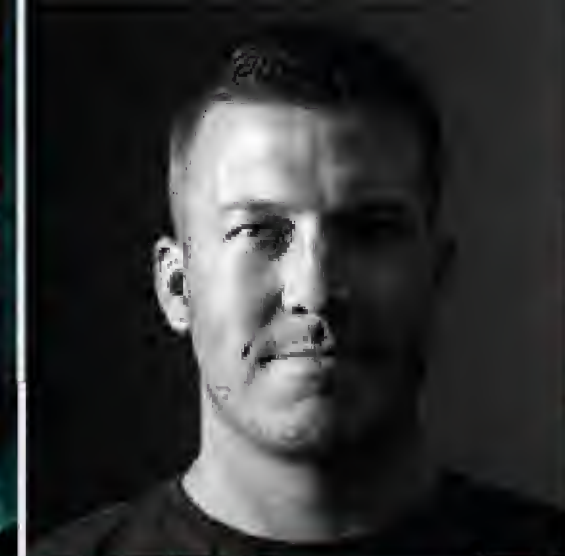
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HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO TO PROTECT THE ONES YOU LOVE?

» **IN EARLY MARCH OF THIS YEAR**, the USCCA created and shared several new self-defense training videos and accompanying downloads as part of our Continuing Education Series, leading up to and culminating in the release of our revolutionary eLearning platform.

I use the word “revolutionary” here because I strongly believe that this new system has the power to change the way people just like you think about — and learn about — self-defense.

Now, it's no secret that I love being able to provide new and unique opportunities for our members and subscribers to better protect themselves and their families. To me, that really defines our overall mission here: delivering overwhelming value as we continue to educate, train and insure hundreds of thousands of responsibly armed Americans all across the country.

But why bring this up again now, several months later? Honestly, I don't mean to sound like I'm tooting the USCCA's horn here, but the series of videos we produced in March was — at least as I see it — one of the most critical we've ever shared with our community. I was profoundly affected by the content of these videos and by the interesting and diverse responses from those who had a chance to watch them.

In the first video, you'll recall that I visited our local gun range and had the opportunity to sit down with several responsibly armed Americans for brief but insightful interviews.

In my face-to-face with each of these men and women, I presented two different life-or-death scenarios in detail and then asked a very important question:

“What would YOU do?”

What I found was that no two answers were the same for either of the scenarios. Some people said they'd draw their weapon. Others said they'd try to retreat. Even among the most similar responses (for example, two people who both said they'd shoot), there were small but drastic differences in how they decided on the same course of action.

Now, I can't say this surprised me all that much ... but it certainly got me thinking.

Here was a group of responsibly armed Americans — some pretty sharp individuals — proving just how personal and complex the

act of self-defense can really be. It reinforced with astounding clarity that there is no clear cut answer — no cut and dry response — when it comes to protecting ourselves and the ones we love.

So how can people like you and me ever be sure we're doing the right thing?

First and foremost, it's important to know and understand the laws governing the use of deadly force in your state. Get all the information you possibly can about justifiable force and any legal requirements to retreat within your jurisdiction. The more you know, the more confident you'll be. And the more confident you are, the more clarity you'll have when it comes time to make that life-or-death decision.

You must also know and understand that if you're in the middle of a life-threatening encounter, things will happen to you that you might not expect ...

Time might slow down. You might develop hearing loss or tunnel vision. You might even experience a loss of your fine motor skills. And that's why it's so crucial that you practice. The more you practice, the more muscle memory you'll build. And the more muscle memory you build, the better your chances of prevailing over the bad guy.

There might not be a “right” answer in any given situation, and that can be a scary thought. But that's why you know the rules. That's why you've practiced. And that's why you know yourself — your limits — and to what length you're willing to go to protect the ones you love.

When it comes down to it, pulling or not pulling the trigger is entirely up to you.

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BACKGROUND CHECKS WON'T REDUCE CRIME

» **FROM TIME TO TIME**, the idea of universal background checks gets floated as part of gun control legislation. The goal is, I'm sure, to eventually convince people to think, "That might work. We should give up some of our freedom for the security of these background checks because they will keep bad guys from getting guns."

Universal background checks are nothing more than a first step to firearms registration and eventual confiscation. They will not keep bad guys from getting guns. If your liberal friends ask why you are opposed to universal background checks, give them a copy of this column.

The current plan of background checks as required for transactions through Federal Firearms License holders is functional and effective when applied to firearms purchases made from dealers. That's because dealers obtain their stock from manufacturers, maintain precise inventory records and, by virtue of their licensed dealer status, are available for closer government scrutiny. When the background check system is applied to private transactions, the effectiveness as a means of reducing crime disappears. Let me give a couple of examples. I'll use the names Jim and Tom just to keep things straight.

In these examples, we assume a universal background check is in place.

Example 1: Jim owns a gun and decides to sell it to Tom. Following the law, Jim pays his fee and conducts the background check. Tom passes the background check but later decides to commit a crime. *Result:* No crime is prevented.

Example 2: Jim owns a gun and decides to sell it to Tom, knowing full well that Tom intends to commit a crime. Because both men are already intent on committing a crime, they ignore the requirement for the background check. Tom buys the gun, commits the crime and flees the scene. Police do not find him or the gun. *Result:* No crime is prevented. Furthermore, because Tom fled the scene and police did not find the gun, they have no idea where Tom got the gun and do not even know to check with Jim to see if Jim sold a gun to Tom.

Example 3: Jim owns a gun and decides to sell it to Tom, knowing full well that Tom intends to commit a crime. Because both men

are already intent on committing a crime, they ignore the requirement for the background check. Tom buys the gun, commits the crime and drops the gun at the scene. Police do not find Tom, but do find the gun. *Result:* No crime is prevented, but police now have a gun. Still, unless this gun was registered (only seven states require registration and maintain records of such), they cannot connect this gun to Jim in order to prosecute him for selling the gun without a background check.

Example 4: Jim owns a gun and decides to sell it to Tom, knowing full well that Tom intends to commit a crime. Because both men are already intent on committing a crime, they ignore the requirement for the background check. Tom buys the gun, commits the crime and is arrested at the scene. Police have Tom and the gun. *Result:* No crime is prevented, but police now have a gun and a criminal in custody. Still, unless this gun was registered (and again, only seven states require registration), they cannot connect this gun to Jim to prosecute him for selling the gun without a background check UNLESS Tom decides to seek a plea bargain for giving up Jim. But should police let Tom plead down from a felony to arrest Jim for the misdemeanor crime of selling a gun without a background check? Even if police made selling a gun without a background check a felony, why would they want to let a violent criminal (armed robber) plead to a lesser charge and get out of jail sooner in order to arrest a non-violent offender?

Through these four examples, you can see that a universal background check will not prevent crime. Those with criminal intent will circumvent the requirement every time. The reason background checks work at the retail level is that government officials can restrict the delivery of new guns from the factory and therefore put retailers out of business if they don't follow the law.

If you think we could "require" people to take their firearms to a retail shop to complete a sale, what would compel someone with criminal intent to go to the gun shop to sell or buy a gun? After the gun is sold from the retailer to a private citizen, we cannot force that citizen to do anything without a police officer standing by his side.

Universal background checks might effectively reduce crime if they require universal firearms registration AND include a requirement for gun owners to provide a regular inventory of firearms to law enforcement. Police could then know the location of each gun and thus seek out offenders who transferred guns without a background check. This system would still not work to prevent crime because the schedule of inventory statements would leave gaps in reporting.

If gun owners were to provide an inventory of firearms each year, that would give criminals an entire year to commit crimes before the inventory was due. If the inventory was required monthly, criminals would still have 30 days to commit crimes, but even then, are we to assume criminals would accurately log their firearms inventory? So, in order to ensure that no one illegally transferred a firearm without a background check, we would need to have law enforcement complete a physical inspection of every registered gun owner's firearms on a regular basis and at a short interval. This would require a huge number of law enforcement officers, removal of Fourth Amendment protections and regular reporting of private lawful activity to the authorities. To me, that sounds an awful lot like a police state. No one wants that.

Stay Safe. Train hard.

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor





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» **THOUGH
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SHOULD YOU CARRY A CCW BADGE?

» **IN REBUTTAL** to the Nov./Dec. 2014 issue article titled "What Should I Know?" in the paragraph referencing "Statements," I would disagree a bit with the opinion that CCW badges "should never be carried."

I have been carrying concealed now for seven years with non-resident Utah and Florida permits and a resident permit for California, where I currently reside. The CCW badge is part of my dress when going out and about. The answer to why I carry the badge is very simple: I don't want to get shot.

Let's say you find yourself in an active shooter situation at a shopping center and all hell breaks loose. You have a CCW permit and pull your weapon in response to confront the active shooter. The police arrive and find the two of you with guns drawn. What's to prevent the officer or officers from shooting you and the active shooter? They don't know who the bad guy is. I don't want to waste time explaining myself when I have a gun pointed at me. Thus the badge comes out to give pause to the law enforcement officers: "Hey, he might be a good guy."

As for impersonating an officer, well, as with my gun that is concealed, so is the badge. It only comes out when the need arises, as with the weapon, thus giving merit to my first concern. The argument that carrying a badge could be seen as impersonating law enforcement is weak since many people have badges for their duties of work — firemen, city council individuals and security officers in malls — and they aren't impersonating the police. I bet you don't blink an eye when your child comes home with his six-shooter and plastic badge. You don't tell him he can't wear that because he's impersonating a LEO.

By the way, this information about the badge comes from a very reliable source as I train at a facility here in southern California called the Artemis Defense Institute (artemisdefenseinstitute.com). It's owned and operated by Sandy and Steve Lieberman, who, by the way, was a private attorney in the area before taking on this new venture. At Artemis, the training is some of the most advanced in southern California, if not the nation, related to CCW permits and their use. They incorporate local law enforcement officers to enhance not only the training that Artemis provides but also in your dealing with LEOs following the aftermath that you will go through. And like I mentioned before, it doesn't hurt to have Steve, with his expert background and law degree, lay out all the legal issues you will encounter. Thus he also agrees with the use of the CCW badge, and I quote: "I don't want to die."

It's just one more tool in your pouch to provide an added measure of safety when, heaven forbid, you ever have to use your

weapon to defend yourself, loved ones or the public. I'm sure there are other opinions to this issue, and I respect that. I have the utmost respect for the many articles and opinions presented by the professionals penning the articles I read in my *Concealed Carry Magazine*, but they are just that, opinions. We need to look at the other side to ensure all the information is presented and form a judgment call of our own, and that is what I present here. Thank you.

Ben, via email

Ben,

What if your active shooter decides to carry a CCW badge as well? Now what is the responding police officer supposed to do? What if a couple forward-thinking criminals decide to buy a couple of the badges in hopes of slowing the police officer's reaction time? Now where does that leave the cop? Where does that leave a guy like you once cops realize they can no longer trust a guy with a fake badge?

There is enough confusion at the scene of a shooting. Honest, law-abiding citizens do not need to add more confusion by flashing a badge that has no legal standing. If you really want to ensure you don't get shot by a police officer arriving on the scene, do not present a threat to that officer. Put your gun on the ground, put your hands in the air and follow every command that officer gives you.

In your scenario, the officer arrives on scene and offers a verbal challenge or pauses long enough for you to show this badge you are carrying. Instead of putting your gun down, you are telling me you will be reaching for your waist to pull out something shiny. You have



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just used up all of your one-second grace period with that officer, and you have gone on to perform an action that looks very much like you continue to be a threat. While the officer is focused on you and the badge you are trying to display, the real threat — the active shooter — continues to go about his business uninterrupted by the officer, who is focused on you. The bad guy might not still be shooting, but he surely now has time to look for cover and change positions. And now this active shooter might have an advantage on the cop who arrived to save the day, because the cop is busy looking at your badge.

I, and any other responding police officer, would be much happier if you would just drop your gun to show you are no longer a threat, point at the guy you were shooting at and holler, "He has a gun!" After that, if you would just lie down on the ground and get behind cover, the police officer can focus on the real threat without wasting valuable time trying to figure out what your tin shield has to do with anything.

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor
Concealed Carry Magazine



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» Armed Georgia Man Interrupts Armed Robbery at Sonic Drive-In

When three men, one of them armed, approached a De Kalb County man and attempted to rob him while he was waiting in line at a Sonic Drive-In, the man drew his legally carried pistol and opened fire on the robbers, critically injuring one and putting the other two to flight. The wounded robber died of his injuries in the hospital. One accomplice was later arrested and the third suspect is still at large. The armed victim will not face charges.

NBC Channel 11, Atlanta, Georgia

» Michigan Girl Hides in Closet With Shotgun, Scares Off Intruders

Home alone one afternoon and hearing sounds of a break-in, an 11-year-old North Branch Township girl took up a shotgun and hid in a closet from the intruders. When one intruder opened the door of the closet she was hiding in, the girl pointed the shotgun at him, causing him and a female accomplice to flee. Responding police captured both burglars not far away. Police commended the girl for her bravery and composure.

The Associated Press

» Georgia Man Wins Shootout With Armed Home Invaders

Hearing loud knocking at his front door, a South Fulton man took a pistol with him when he went to investigate. When he refused to open the door to the knockers, the door was kicked in by three intruders. The homeowner promptly fired on the invaders, which started an exchange of gunfire that ended with the homeowner unharmed and victorious, one intruder shot multiple times and all three put to flight. Neighbors praised the actions of the defending homeowner, only suggesting that perhaps a shotgun might have served him better as a defensive weapon.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Georgia

» South Carolina Woman Defends Against Needle-Wielding Robber

A Socastee woman was walking toward an ATM to get some cash when a man approached her. Displaying a large hypodermic needle, the man threatened to stick her with it if she did not give him some money. Instead, the quick-thinking woman drew her legally carried pistol and threatened to shoot the would-be robber. Seeing the gun, the assailant fled. No one was injured in the exchange.

thetruthaboutguns.com

» Connecticut Armed Citizen Thwarts Two Armed Robbers

Four men were leaving a Bridgeport tavern early one morning when two assailants — one armed — attempted to rob them at gunpoint. When the armed robber shot one of his friends, a CCW holder in the group drew his pistol and fired on the robbers, shooting the armed one and routing the other. The wounded suspect will be charged with numerous felonies on his release from the hospital. Police are still seeking the other suspect. Police stated the defending victim will not face charges for his act of self-defense.

thebridgeportnews.com

» Minnesota Woman Shoots, Fights Off Ex-Boyfriend

A Mounds View woman had to resort to gunfire to fend off an attack from her ex-boyfriend. Despite the woman telling the man the relationship was over and him moving out of the home they previously shared, the man came to her home at about midnight one night and demanded entry. Fearing the man due to his prior threats against her, the woman went to the door armed with a pistol and told him repeatedly through the closed and locked door to leave. When the man broke into the home and forced the woman to the floor, she shot him once in the chest, stopping the encounter. Responding police arrested the man, who survived his wound and will face charges of domestic assault and terroristic threatening.

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» Pennsylvania CCW Holder Stops Armed Robbery

An Upper Darby CCW permit holder was walking in a park near his home when a gun-wielding masked man approached him and demanded money. Rather than comply, the would-be victim grabbed the assailant's gun and attempted to disarm the robber. During the ensuing struggle, the victim drew his pistol and fired on the robber, hitting him in the head and killing him. The gun the robber used turned out to be a pellet gun. Responding police assured the distraught victim that he did what he had to do and would not face charges.

ABC Channel 6, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

» Texas Woman Prevents Home Invasion

Hearing noises outside her home at 4:30 a.m., a Canton woman took her pistol when she went to investigate. Seeing a man attempting to break into a side door to the residence, she fired on him, killing him and stopping the crime. Police later determined the man to be a sex offender recently on parole who was also suspected in a recent arson.

dailycaller.com

» Armed Texas Customer Stops Restaurant Shooter

A Harris County Court investigator from Houston was having dinner in a strip-mall restaurant when two men started arguing. The argument seemingly ended when one of the men left the restaurant, but he returned with a pistol from his car and shot several times through the glass door of the dining place. That's when the investigator drew his pistol and fired on the shooter, killing him and ending the attack.

KWTX.com, Houston, Texas

» Michigan Man Shoots Home Invader

Hearing suspicious noises at about 5 a.m., a Southgate homeowner took up a pistol when he went to investigate. While walking through his home, he encountered an armed man inside his house. The homeowner, fearing for his life, fired on the armed intruder, who died at the scene. The invader turned out to be a 19-year-old neighbor who was believed to be looking to steal prescription drugs.

clickondetroit.com

» Armed Utah Citizen Stops Knife-Wielding Robber

A Vernal man entered an Arby's restaurant for lunch only to see a woman armed with a knife demanding money from store personnel. The customer slipped out to his vehicle, retrieved a pistol and returned to confront the woman, who quickly realized the futility of a knife in a gunfight. The customer held the woman for responding police, who commended him for his action.

Fox 13, Salt Lake City, Utah





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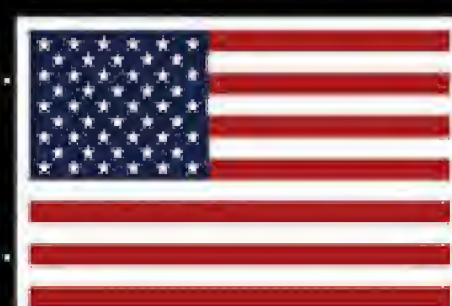


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»SELF-DEFENSE CONSEQUENCES

Kevin,

I have a very high regard for your expertise and opinion, so please don't take this as negative criticism but as genuine puzzlement.

When I read *Concealed Carry Magazine* cover to cover, which I do every month, I read the numerous cases in which a gun owner successfully defends himself or loved ones from a deadly threat. I read about how important it is to be ready to defend yourself and to use deadly force quickly and decisively to stop an imminent threat to your own life. I read how the right to self-defense is sacred and must be protected assiduously. But then I read articles from the legal experts who make it clear that if one even draws their weapon, let alone actually shoots someone in self-defense, the legal repercussions will likely be catastrophic. You will be treated more harshly than the criminal you shot. You will almost certainly spend time in jail or prison with the very kind of individuals you are trying to defend against, and your life will never be the same. In fact, the consequences of the use of deadly force or even drawing your weapon are so harsh it might make your life seem not worth living afterward.

I find myself thinking that resisting a violent attack by responding with deadly force just won't be worth the consequences. With that mindset in the face of an attack, which allows me mere seconds to make a decision, I worry that I'll be so hamstrung by the fear of ultimate consequences for my actions that I'll fail to act in time to respond effectively.

What say you?

Ken, via email

Ken,

We want you to keep those consequences in the back of your mind, and when at all possible, avoid violent confrontations. The best fight is the one you are not in.

But the other side of that coin is the importance of proper training and a thorough knowledge of the laws surrounding the use of force for self-defense. Consider it this way: If you shoot someone in self-defense, you are thrust into a homicide investigation and the target of that investigation is YOU! We expect that the results of that investigation will

clear you of any wrongdoing and the label attached to your case will read "Justifiable Homicide." The reason this happens and the reason it is important that it happens is that we, as law-abiding citizens, respect the law. In our country, ANY taking of a human life and indeed any use of deadly force should be investigated fully to ensure that one person is not taking the life, liberty or property of another without a clearly defined legal right to do so. We always want to prosecute the offender to the fullest extent of the law and make him pay for his crimes. To that end, we need to thoroughly investigate such actions to determine if there was a crime or if the actions were justified. So, in the end, it is our respect for the law that requires we train, learn the law and endure the ensuing investigations.

That is why the USCCA exists. We train, educate and insure responsibly armed Americans. We teach you the actions to take to keep you safe. We help to explain the laws so you know your rights and your boundaries. Then we provide a legal back-up plan to make sure you get the best defense and a fair and honest investigation into your actions. This combination of training, education and insurance is designed to give you the confidence to act without hesitation when your life is on the line.

I don't mean to brag, but think of all the great information we have presented over the years. That information should be helping you to make the right choices when it comes to self-defense. And you should rest assured with the knowledge that when you make correct choices and still have to use your gun, we will be there to help you through the legal aftermath.

Stay safe,

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor

»SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING

Greetings,

I am a South Carolina CWP holder, and I fully exercise that right, but my job requires that I travel nearly every week. I often travel to states that don't reciprocate with South Carolina, and I travel a fair amount outside the United States. I almost never check a bag (in the interest of time and because of the risk of loss or theft), so taking a firearm on the road with me is not feasible. I have practiced and taught martial arts for nearly

20 years, but unless I get close enough to disarm my opponent, these skills are not going to do much good in a gunfight. So, my question is this: What guidance do you have for those of us who are not able to carry when traveling?

Thank you,

Tracy, via email

Tracy,

Until we can work together to change the over-reaching and obstructive laws of the remaining states of this Union that do not respect our Second Amendment, our options can be limited. Additionally, as you travel with nothing but a carry-on, you are correct that traveling with a sidearm is not going to be possible as long as the Feds continue enforcing their nonsensical rules against civilized persons being allowed to defend themselves.

My advice for those who are absolutely not able to carry a sidearm, pepper spray, knife, baton or anything else that will not be allowed through TSA screening is to obtain a, for lack of a better term, tactical umbrella. These are extremely popular in the British Isles, where the poor subjects of the Queen have been disarmed to such an extent that a sturdy, unbreakable umbrella is their most prudent course of action. They draw very little attention, are extremely practical on a rainy day and are capable of devastating defensive strikes during an emergency. My recommendation would be to hit up real-self-defense.com and see which model best suits your tastes.

Best of luck and stay safe,

Ed Combs
Associate Editor

»ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS

Kevin Michalowski,

Thank you for *Concealed Carry Magazine*. I am impressed by the quality of the articles and depth of experience of your membership. Keep up the good work.

I am not a professional firearms instructor, but I have taken beginners to the range. With this in mind, I have two comments.

(1) Your magazine is guilty of preaching to the choir. The majority of Americans who purchase firearms for self-defense rarely go to the range. The firearm is purchased. The firearm is loaded. Problem solved. How can

your magazine deal with this reality? What advice would you provide?

(2) I have learned more from attempting to provide basic instruction than the student could ever imagine. May I respectfully suggest a regular column that features the basics? You could entitle this column "Basics for Beginners." My local gun store is sometimes loaded with first-time buyers. I listen to their questions and remain silent. I do not want to interfere with a business transaction. The sales person sold another small, light firearm chambered for a serious cartridge to a beginner who will fire one shot and never pull the trigger again. I realize that first-time buyers might not know about your magazine, but the concealed carry community should encourage an outreach to those who need basic information.

Paul Koller, via email

Paul,

You are correct that we sometimes fall into the trap of thinking all of our readers are as experienced as the staff and writers at Concealed Carry Magazine. We understand there is a large group of people out there that is just getting started, and our goal is to serve that group as effectively as we serve our readers who have had more time on the trigger. We will take your suggestions to heart and ensure that we cover all elements for the concealed carry lifestyle, from brand new shooters to those who have been at it for a while.

Thanks for reading.

Stay safe.

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor

»REACHING FOR THE CARD

In your February/March 2015 issue, you have an article entitled "The First 48 Hours After a Self Defense Shooting." On page 60, the writer advises, "Don't reach for that card in your wallet." I have one of those cards issued from USCCA, which you instruct to be given to law enforcement once they arrive on the scene. It essentially states that I will not make any statements until my attorney arrives and to please afford me the same courtesy as would be given a fellow officer after

a self-defense shooting. So, do we hand over the card or not? There is conflicting advice here it seems.

Jeff Paulk, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Jeff,

I hear you loud and clear, and to be honest, I knew I would be getting emails like this one. We occasionally run such statements for just this reason: We love to spark debate within the concealed carry community about theory, techniques and personal protocols.

When it comes to "handing over the card," I advise people to strike a balance. If you are forced to defend yourself, the police will undoubtedly want a response when they ask, "What happened?" I say that an individual should tell the officer that the individual they had to shoot was trying to kill them, point out evidence and witnesses, and then say that though they will fully cooperate with the investigation, they do not wish to say anything else without an attorney present.

If the officer doesn't take the hint (which they likely will not as this is part of their training), then I would advise you bring the card out. The card is full of excellent pointers and (hopefully) the phone number of the attorney with whom you've already built a relationship. It's a terrific tool, and one that should not be overlooked. The author's point, however, was that the card should not be flippantly handed to an officer like a business card ... not that they should never be brought into play at all.

Stay safe,

Ed Combs
Associate Editor

»BEST IN THE BIZ

Dear Tim and Staff,

I have been a USCCA member for about a year now. I certainly appreciate the measure of comfort that it provides should the need to defend myself arise.

I read three gun-related magazines regularly, and *Concealed Carry Magazine* is by far the best of them all. I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for providing such a high-quality, informative magazine, both in content and presentation. The November/December 2014 issue might just be the best so far!

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Greg Durden, via email

»THE GUN FIGHT

Several weeks ago we had the opportunity to send in requests for future articles. Well, here is a very important topic I need help with. As you are aware, Bloomberg et al are turning their attention to state ballot initiatives in an attempt to slowly eat away at our Second Amendment rights. The topic I need help with is: How do you explain to someone who has no interest in firearms and who feels they are well protected by the local police that expanded background checks, national gun registration and erosion of our Second Amendment rights is bad for everyone? Why should they care about my right to protect my family and loved ones? How do we convince the sheep that they too need the sheepdogs to survive? Please help me make the argument.

Thank you,

Fred Itzkowitz, via email

Fred,

"No one is so blind as those who refuse to see." We cannot force people to understand. Many people need to experience something before they believe it. Sadly, most people who experience lost liberty will never live to see it returned. I have an upcoming story about universal background checks, but short of continuing to be politically active and socially responsible, there is not much we can do to help people to believe as we believe. We can lead by example and be the best gun owners we know how to be. We can present facts to counter every emotionally based argument the left offers up and we can be there to help people when they have questions. Even though we are on opposite sides of the issues, we should not be adversarial. Our goal should be to try to help people understand that freedom is something we should all protect. We can do that best by showing people that responsibly armed Americans are not the problem.

Stay safe,

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor



» **ASSISTED-OPEN** knives prove themselves on this nation's streets and on this planet's battlefields every day, and this new offering from SOG would more than meet the needs of any law enforcement officer, military service member or private citizen. It's a lightweight, compact folder that features a reversible low-carry belt or pocket clip for easy EDC and a partially serrated clip-point blade for everything from light to heavy duty cutting. The fixed-blade Instinct Mini offers backup utility in an extremely compact package, including a clip sheath that mounts to a belt, boot or gear, and even ships with a ball chain for deployment as a neck knife. Learn more about these and the entire line of tactical blades at sognives.com.

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LENGTH: 8.3 INCHES
CLOSED LENGTH: 4.7 INCHES
WEIGHT: 4.4 OUNCES
BLADE LENGTH: 3.6 INCHES
BLADE THICKNESS: 0.1 INCHES
MECHANISM: BUTTON-LOCK
FINISH: BLACK TINI
BLADE MATERIAL: AUS-8 STEEL
HANDLE MATERIAL: HARD-
ANODIZED 6061 T6 ALUMINUM
MSRP: \$118

SOG INSTINCT MINI

LENGTH: 5.9 INCHES
WEIGHT: 1.7 OUNCES
BLADE LENGTH: 2.3 INCHES
BLADE THICKNESS: 0.16 INCHES
FINISH: SATIN POLISHED
BLADE MATERIAL: 5CR15MOV
MSRP: \$39



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»FEDERAL COURT DISMISSES CALIFORNIA GUN LAW CHALLENGE

A California federal district court dismissed a challenge that California's Unsafe Handgun Act (UHA) is unconstitutional. The court upheld the UHA as not infringing on California residents' Second Amendment rights and rebuffed the "equal protection challenge" brought by the Second Amendment and Calguns Foundations. The UHA prohibits the manufacture, sale, gifting or lending of any handgun in California that does not meet four requirements, including the microstamping requirement NSSF is separately challenging in state court.

The court ignored the plaintiffs' argument that inherent in the right to keep and bear arms there must also be a corresponding ability to acquire them, concluding that more than 1,000 firearms currently are available. Plaintiffs immediately appealed this order to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

From The National Shooting Sports Foundation – March 2, 2015

»COURT DENIES REHEARING IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AMMO BAN SUIT

Anti-hunting groups suffered another defeat when the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals denied the Center for Biological Diversity's request for rehearing of the court's decision not to ban traditional lead ammunition under the Toxic Substances Control Act. The court issued a one-sentence order rejecting the lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency.

The NSSF defended the interests of the firearms and ammunition industry in the suit, which if allowed to move forward, would have had far-reaching consequences for sportsmen, gun owners, law enforcement, the military and conservation funding.

From The National Shooting Sports Foundation – March 2, 2015

»CONCEALED CARRY READY FOR W. VIRGINIA HOUSE CONSIDERATION AFTER PASSING SENATE

West Virginia is in line to become the sixth state to allow the concealed carry of

a gun without a permit. The bill cleared the state Senate and was sent to the House of Delegates.

The bill, which passed 32-2, would eliminate the current permit requirement and training that operates through county sheriff's departments. It also would move back the age of a person allowed to carry a hidden firearm from 21 to 18.

Senator Mike Romano (D-Harrison) voted for the bill but tried to amend it a few times Friday before the final vote. One of his amendments would keep the age at 21.

"We don't have the life experience. We don't have the knowledge of what it is about life and death when we're 18 years old," Romano said.

From The West Virginia Metro News – Feb. 27, 2015

»MINNESOTA: SUPPRESSOR OWNERSHIP AND SHALL SIGN LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

Two pro-gun bills aimed at respecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Minnesotans were introduced in the Minnesota Legislature. Senate File 1435, sponsored by state Sens. Paul E. Gazelka (R-09), David J. Tomassoni (DFL-06) and Lyle Koenen (DFL-17) in the state Senate, and House File 1434, sponsored by state Reps. Tony Cornish (R-23B), Mark Anderson (R-09A) and David Dill (DFL-03A) in the state House, are companion bills that would legalize ownership and possession of firearm sound suppressors.

Suppressors, sometimes referred to as "silencers," are items covered under the National Firearms Act. Currently illegal to own under Minnesota law, suppressors are legal to own under federal law and in 39 states. While they do not eliminate the sound of a firearm, suppressors do reduce the muzzle report of the gun much in the same way that a muffler reduces exhaust noise from a car or truck.

There are numerous benefits associated with the use of suppressors. These benefits include increased accuracy due to reduced recoil and muzzle blast, protection from hearing damage and reduced noise pollution. Noise complaints are frequently used as an excuse to close shooting ranges, informal shooting areas and hunting lands throughout the country. Increased use of

suppressors will help to eliminate many of these complaints and protect hunting and shooting areas well into the future.

Also included in SF 1435 and HF 1434 is a "shall sign" provision, requiring that certification by a chief law enforcement officer (CLEO), when a signoff is required for the transfer of a firearm or other item regulated by the National Firearms Act, be provided within 15 days as long as the applicant is not prohibited by law from receiving it. Under current law, a CLEO may refuse to sign off for any reason, including their own personal feelings toward NFA-related items, which has created issues for law-abiding citizens. By removing any possibility of personal bias, which might reside behind many CLEOs refusing to sign off, and creating a statewide standard, SF 1435 and HF 1434 protect the rights of law-abiding gun owners across Minnesota.

From The National Rifle Association – March 7, 2015

»MICHIGAN GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER SIGNS REVISED GUN BILLS TO 'STREAMLINE' CONCEALED PISTOL PERMIT PROCESS

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, who has twice vetoed similar proposals, signed into law revised legislation to modify the process for obtaining a concealed pistol license in Michigan.

Senate Bills 34 and 35, now Public Acts 3 and 4, of 2015, call for the elimination of county gun boards by December. Duties will be transferred to county clerks and the Michigan State Police.

"These bills streamline how we issue concealed pistol licenses, creating a uniform system that will better support the rights of firearms owners in Michigan," Snyder said in a statement. "I appreciate that the Legislature revamped this legislation, removing any unintended consequences that could have put domestic abuse victims in danger."

The Republican governor had vetoed county gun board bills in January, citing concerns with a provision that would have removed a blanket CPL prohibition for individuals subject to a personal protection order.

He vetoed much broader legislation back in 2012 that would have also allowed permit holders with extra training to bring concealed weapons in carry-free zones like

schools and bars.

The new bills, approved by the Republican-led Senate in the first voting of the new session and later approved by the House, do not contain either of the provisions that had led to those consecutive vetoes.

Supporters say scrapping gun boards will make Michigan a true "shall issue" state, requiring clerks to issue pistol permits based on statutory eligibility alone. The gun board process and timeline could vary by county.

"It was a long haul," said Sen. Mike Green, R-Mayville, who sponsored various iterations of the legislation. "It's been four and a half years, and a lot of work has gone into it. I'm happy (the governor) decided to sign it. In a year, people will say, what was the gun board again? Why did we have those? I don't foresee any complications."

The new bills, revised as they were, still faced some pushback. Critics argued they will effectively eliminate the opportunity for discretion by local officials who may know information that does not pop up in a standard background check.

"We know from research that giving law enforcement discretion to determine who should legally be allowed to carry firearms is an important protection against high-risk individuals, such as those with recent violent histories, from bringing loaded guns into public places," said Dr. Daniel Webster, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research. "Because our federal standards are so weak, it's critical that extra safeguards are in place to deny permits to applicants who pose a danger to society."

The new laws, once implemented, will require county clerks to issue permits to qualifying applicants within 45 days. If they do not issue or reject a permit by that deadline, an application receipt will qualify as a temporary permit. MSP will be tasked with running background checks and verifying other eligibility requirements.

Initial application fees for a five-year permit will be reduced from \$105 to \$100 under the laws, which dictate how funding will be distributed to counties and state police.

Renewal application fees will increase from \$105 to \$115, and MSP will be expected to develop an online renewal system by 2018.

From MichiganLive.com – March 4, 2015

»LAWMAKER PROPOSES BILL TO BLOCK AMMO BAN

A Florida representative proposed a bill to block a ban on the sale of certain ammunition.

U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney introduced the Protecting Second Amendment Rights Act in response to federal regulator's proposed changes for exempting armor piercing ammo for sporting purposes.

Rooney said his legislation would prohibit the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives or any federal agency from changing regulations or prohibiting the manufacture, importation or sale of ammo in the U.S.

"Congress has made its intentions clear that this ammunition is for sporting purposes and should not be restricted," he said in a statement. "We cannot and we will not stand by while the Obama Administration tramples on the Constitution, the rule of law and the Second Amendment rights of hunters in my district and across the country."

The ATF introduced the proposal and informed the public that if it didn't change the framework for regulating ammo, it would have to prohibit 5.56 "green tip" since it has the legal characteristics of armor piercing rounds.

Despite the ATF suggesting the proposed changes would give it more flexibility to grant exemption requests, Rooney sees the changes as an attempt to make it easier for the ATF to ban ammo.

Rooney introduced the bill without text on Feb. 27, and it was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

From Guns.com – March 3, 2015

»NEW BILL GIVES THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THE POWER TO BLOCK GUN SALES TO 'SUSPECTED' TERRORISTS

More than two dozen Democrats in the House and Senate — and one Republican — want to give the U.S. attorney general the power to block the sale of guns and explosives to known terrorists and also to anyone who is "appropriately suspected" of being a terrorist.

The Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act was introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.). They say it makes no

sense that people on the terrorist watch list are prohibited from boarding airplanes in the United States but are still free to buy guns and explosives.

"Federal law already prohibits nine categories of dangerous persons from purchasing or possessing firearms, including the mentally ill and criminals," King said. "Yet, after almost 14 years, we still allow suspected terrorists the ability to purchase firearms. It's time for common sense to prevail before it's too late."

Feinstein and King noted that, according to GAO, people on the terrorist watch list who tried to buy a weapon in 2013 and 2014 were successful about 93 percent of the time.

But it seems unlikely that a GOP-led House and Senate will agree to give the attorney general the power to stop gun sales, especially with President Barack Obama still in office for the next two years.

Under the bill, the attorney general would be able to stop the transfer of a gun or explosive to a "known or suspected" terrorist if it's possible the person might use the firearm in connection with terrorism. The bill language says the attorney general can stop the transfer if he or she "has a reasonable belief that the prospective transferee may use a firearm in connection with terrorism."

Sales could be blocked to anyone known to be involved in terrorist activities or anyone who is "appropriately suspected." That term is used throughout the bill but is never defined and would likely be a cause for alarm by defenders of the Second Amendment who might worry about giving the attorney general too much discretion in deciding who is "appropriately suspected" of terrorism.

One example of how that authority could be abused was revealed last week, when it was reported that the Department of Homeland Security had produced an intelligence assessment that focuses on terrorist attacks from right-wing groups interested in defending themselves from the federal government. That led to more criticism that the Obama administration is not worried enough about radical Islamic terrorist threats and is overly worried about right-wing groups.

The legislation would keep current provisions of the law that allow people who are blocked from buying a gun or an explosive to know why he or she was denied and

to challenge that decision at the Department of Justice and then through a lawsuit if needed.

The Senate bill is co-sponsored by 11 Democrats, and the House bill is cosponsored by 14 Democrats. King is the only Republican on the bill.

From The Blaze – Feb. 26, 2015

»LAWMAKERS TAKING ANOTHER CRACK AT EXPANDING GUN CHECKS

Former congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords returned to Capitol Hill to help kick-start a longshot campaign to expand criminal background checks to all commercial firearms sales.

Similar legislation that sought to expand background checks failed to get a hearing in the House last session. With the GOP expanding its majority and winning control of the Senate, prospects for the bill might be even more unlikely this session.

Still, Democratic Rep. Mike Thompson, of California, predicted the legislation would pass if GOP leadership would let it come to the House floor for a vote. Congress passed record funding for background checks in the last session, he said.

"If they are willing to fund the system at historic levels, they should support using the system," Thompson said.

Under the current system, cashiers at stores selling guns call in to check with the FBI or other designated agencies to ensure the customer doesn't have a criminal background. Many lawmakers want to expand such checks to sales at gun shows and purchases made through the Internet.

The National Rifle Association opposes expanding background checks. The organization says many people sent to prison because of gun crimes get their guns through theft or the black market, and no amount of background checks can stop those criminals. The group attributed the effort on Capitol Hill to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has worked to impose stricter background checks in several states.

"If Bloomberg and his supporters were serious about solving underlying problems, they would work to reform our broken mental health system, not attack the rights of America's 100 million gun owners," said Chris Cox, executive director of the NRA's lobbying arm.

While Congress has declined to pass expanded background checks for firearm purchases, five states have done so since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in December 2012. They are Washington, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware and New York, according to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

Giffords and Mark Kelly, a former NASA space shuttle commander, founded Americans for Responsible Solutions. The organization advocates for stricter gun laws. They are both scheduled to be at the news conference with Thompson and a handful of other lawmakers on Wednesday. The Arizona Democrat has become an increasingly active player in the gun-control movement since being shot in the head as she met with constituents in Tucson nearly four years ago.

"We fought a long, hard battle to pass the Brady Bill with bipartisan support in 1993, and now we simply need to finish the job," said Sarah Brady, co-founder of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

From ABC News – March 3, 2015

»DEBATE OVER UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR FIREARMS SALES GROWS

The gun control debate continues as U.S. lawmakers announce legislation to implement universal background checks on all gun sales.

It's garnering bipartisan support, including support from U.S. Congressman Pat Meehan. Meanwhile, pro-gun supporters argue against the need for this legislation. Meehan, R-7, of Upper Darby, co-sponsored the resolution.

"A stronger background check system on commercial sales will make our communities safer and help keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them," he said in a prepared statement. "This legislation will help save lives while protecting the rights of law-abiding Americans."

He supported the same legislation last session and led bipartisan proposals to create stricter penalties on straw purchases and gun trafficking. The Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2015, or House Resolution 1217, is identical to what failed in 2013. As a second attempt is made to add further regulatory measures, the same players are unsatisfied

with the political maneuver to correct the nations gun system.

Pro-gun advocates, including NRA leaders, argue that federal law already outlaws individuals prohibited from obtaining a firearm, and a universal background check won't decrease criminal activity. One Pennsylvania gun rights advocate points to flaws in the current system that need to be addressed instead of tacking on additional regulations.

"Universal background checks are nothing more than another item in the stable of political deception (that fails to address) real problems in our society," said Kim Stolfier, chairman of gun rights group Firearms Owners Against Crime.

Federal regulations prohibit unlawful transfers to anyone "known or believed to be prohibited from possessing firearms." Those prohibited are classified as convicted felons and individuals adjudicated by the court system as mentally ill. The federal law, or the Gun Control Act of 1963, requires background checks on firearm dealers, manufacturers and importers. It also prohibits interstate transfers except for licensed manufacturers, dealers and importers.

The Brady Act of 1993 requires federally licensed dealers to request background checks on firearms transfers. It omits private sellers. Stolfier pointed out 23 state and federal gun laws were violated in the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School. In the past 25 years, there have been police officers shot and killed by individuals prohibited from purchasing a firearm, including the recent shooting death of Philadelphia Police Officer Robert Wilson III. Lawmakers might argue single-day mass shooting events that occurred in the past 10 years are reasons for political action to ensure the safety of citizens.

Gun control activists dub the legislative push for universal background checks as a way to close "the gun show loophole," by requiring a background check for private sales of all firearms. Since private sellers are classified as individuals selling or transferring firearms not as a primary source of income, they are not subjected to the same federal licensing regulations as for-profit gun dealers. Gun shops are required to register as federally-licensed arms dealers by meeting application requirements set by the U.S. government. Federal arms

dealers must perform background checks during the time of purchase. The check runs a quick search on all available records on the individual purchasing a gun. State laws on gun sales and purchases vary. New York and Delaware expanded background checks for all firearms transfers, including purchases from unlicensed sellers. Pennsylvania's laws have similar restrictions, but only on handguns. In Pennsylvania, there are no permit, registration or license requirements for owners with rifles, shotguns and handguns. Carriers are only required to have a permit to carry a handgun in the state.

Regardless of current laws, gun control advocates want the system repaired.

"One of the key things to note is that current law in Pennsylvania requires that all handguns (purchases) are subject to background checks, but there is a loophole in Pennsylvania," said Terry Rumsey, co-chair of Delaware County United for Sensible Gun Policy.

He said the loophole that currently exists in Pennsylvania's legislation is permitting private sales of rifles and shotguns without a background check.

"A federal law would take care of the whole country, and that's the strongest solution possible," Rumsey said.

He noted a "long-standing political dominance of the NRA" has delayed expanding background check regulations. He said there's a common perception from legislators that supporting NRA initiatives guarantees chances at winning an election.

"It comes down to the fact that legislators are still marching in step with NRA lobbyists rather than the people who they represent," Rumsey said. "We are trying to change that dynamic, and we are making progress."

NRA officials continue to question lawmakers' efforts in regulating gun distribution. In a statement posted on the NRA website last year, organization leaders blamed the problem on a "broken mental health system that is not going to be fixed with more background checks at gun shows." Gun rights backers think it's impractical to implement universal background checks to close supposed "loopholes" that don't exist. Federal law currently states it's illegal for anyone with a criminal history or serious mental illness to possess a firearm.

"It puts us all at risk," Stolfer said.

Meehan did not immediately return a request for comment regarding opposition against the legislation.

From The Delaware County Daily Times – March 5, 2015

»BIPARTISAN BACKGROUND CHECK BILL INTRODUCED IN U.S. HOUSE

A bill was introduced in the House that aims to close background check loopholes in the purchase of firearms in the country, officials said.

Written by representatives Pete King, R-New York, and Mike Thompson, D-California, HR 1217 will expand the background check system to encompass the commercial sale of all firearms, including those sold at gun shows, through the Internet and in classified ads. It will strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by incentivizing states to improve their reporting through federal grant dollars, includes exceptions for family and friend transfers and will form a commission to examine incidents of mass violence in the country, according to a press release from Thompson's office.

The Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2015, proponents of which say is meant to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill, is identical to the Manchin-Toomey bill that failed in 2013. The NRA has said a universal background check system would put an undo burden on law-abiding gun owners. The group had a similar quarrel with the other bipartisan attempt at background check legislation drafted by West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin and Republican Sen. Pat Toomey.

An article referencing the NRA's involvement in that effort quickly drew vitriol from the gun rights group the same day it was published.

"NRA does NOT support universal background checks and is not working with Manchin to implement this type of legislation," the NRA's Chris Cox wrote in a 2013 statement. "NRA opposes, and will continue to oppose, universal background checks and registration schemes."

Thompson and King were both given Ds on the NRA's Political Victory Fund re-

port card — a system that rates political candidates on their voting record as it pertains to gun rights issues — during the last election cycle. Both Thompson and King voted against an amendment in 2014 that passed the House by a 60-point margin and would prohibit the District of Columbia from implementing certain firearms laws, according to Project Vote Smart, a nonpartisan political research organization. The two also voted against a concealed carry reciprocity bill in 2011, which passed the House by 118 votes and went to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. In 2010, when a bill was introduced exempting guns from an estate for bankruptcy proceedings, the two voted in support.

That's not to say the two have always seen eye to eye on gun-related legislation. In 2008, while Thompson voted in favor of killing portions of the D.C. firearms ban — namely, with the repeal of both the registration requirement and ammunition ban in addition to the removal of criminal penalties for possession of unregistered firearms — King opposed the repeals bill, according to political data. A few years earlier, Thompson supported a bill seeking to reform the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, while King voted against it. The same year, 2006, the two took the same positions on an amendment to prevent funds for trigger lock enforcement. Because King has shown he's willing to reach across the aisle, it's no surprise the NRA has given him such a poor political score. The New York native has said he's considering a bid in the 2016 presidential race, if only to keep isolationist Republicans like Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul and Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas from taking his party away from what he called realistic foreign policy and national security priorities.

The new background check legislation was co-authored by a bipartisan House coalition made up of representatives Mike Fitzpatrick, R-Pennsylvania, Pat Meehan, R-Pennsylvania, Bob Dold, R-Illinois, Bennie Thompson, D-Mississippi, Elizabeth Esty, D-Connecticut and Kathleen Rice, D-New York.

From Guns.com – March 4, 2015



1» Brass Stacker Glock Slide Pull

This drop-in modification to your Glock pistol allows individuals with compromised hand strength to more easily rack the slide. It installs with the included hex key and requires no drilling or permanent modification of the gun. CNC-machined from lightweight 6061 aluminum, made in the USA and covered by a 100-percent lifetime warranty, head to brassstacker.com to get yours. **MSRP: \$45**

2» Sneaky Pete InnerPocket

This calfskin leather pocket organizer securely holds a cell phone, single-stack magazine, business cards, identification and other common items in a convenient position to be drawn from the pocket without having to expose the entire unit. Available in exotic prints as well as solid colors at sneakypeteholsters.com.

MSRP: \$29.95

3» Gold Star HOT ROD Center Console Holster

Depending on your preferred level of security in your vehicle, the HOT ROD facilitates mounting your sidearm and magazines in the console in order to keep your defensive arms at hand and safely stowed. Once the hook-and-loop backing is mounted to the inside of the console, the holster unit is positioned to your preference for ease of accessibility and a quick draw. Find discreet storage and rapid access with all the coverage of a quality IWB holster from goldstarholsters.net.

MSRP: \$60.95

4» Cutting Edge Bullets PHD .45 ACP

The PHD — “Personal Home Defense” — cartridge combines Jagemann brass with a deeply hollow-pointed copper solid. Once in a target, the petals on the 150-grain projectile are designed to shear off, separating the bullet into five separate pieces and optimizing its threat-stopping potential. Available in common defensive sidearm calibers at cuttingedgebullets.com.

MSRP: \$33.99-\$39.99

5» PowerTac Cadet Gen 2

With a blinding maximum output of 492 lumens, this unit operates off of a Cree XM-L2U2 LED and a single CR123A battery. Three output levels and a strobe setting make this extremely compact and reliable flashlight an excellent addition to anyone’s EDC. Get yours with an included no-hassle lifetime warranty at powertac.com.

MSRP: \$64.95



In the February/March 2015 issue, we misidentified the web address for Militec-1 Lubricant. We regret the error and encourage you to visit www.militec-1.com for the incredible and unique story behind this battle-tested product.



6» Liberty Lube CLP and Solvent

Liberty Lube CLP penetrates into the pores of your firearm on a microscopic level, preventing it from running off of the moving parts and greatly reducing friction. As it works on the micro level, results are best when you can apply the product and then heat the firearm to lock the lubricant in. Liberty Lube Solvent requires only two to five minutes on your firearm before fouling can be simply brushed away. For more information and a demonstration, visit libertygunlube.com.

MSRP: \$20/\$30



1» Nelson Holsters XCalibur

This IWB holster was designed at the request of a former Navy SEAL and is in use by several Team Members today. A neoprene backing is bonded to a moisture-wicking material, which keeps sweat off of your gun and allows for a more comfortable ride. They are available for right- and left-handers, and can be ordered with loops for all sizes of belts and in dozens of color/reinforcement combinations. Score yours at nelsonholsters.com.

MSRP: \$115.95

2» SOG Dark Energy 550A

The 550-lumen Dark Energy ships with a pair of CR123 batteries and operates at momentary on, reading, 40 percent, 100 percent, and strobe. Its 6061-T6 body is aggressively textured for sure grip and the pocket clip affords a very positive grip on clothing and gear. Available at national retailers and at sogknives.com.

MSRP: \$122

3» Lyman Essential Gun Mat

This American-made cleaning mat will protect your gun and your table while performing routine maintenance. Chemical-resistant and made from synthetic rubber for a non-stick surface, it also features molded-in storage compartments to keep your gun parts and cleaning components secured and organized. Measuring 15.75 by 10 inches, order yours at lymanproducts.com.

MSRP: \$14.98

4» CrossBreed PacMat

This combination of a left- or right-handed CrossBreed holster and a 9x8-inch platform allows you to carry securely and safely in a briefcase, backpack or any other type of personal luggage. Also available are magazine carriers and the Bedside Back-Up Assembly, affording you the option of securing your pistol at hand while you sleep. Dozens of quality options are available at crossbreedholsters.com. **MSRP: \$47.95 (with multiple optional add-ons)**

5» Elite Survival Systems Smokescreen Concealment Backpack

This single-strap backpack is designed for maximum versatility in a discreet package. The dedicated gun compartment with built-in holster rides below a main compartment large enough for a light jacket, water and other EDC components. Segmented foam panels on the back surface facilitate comfort and ventilation. Available in blue, black and coyote at elitesurvival.com. **MSRP: \$129.95**



6» Skinner Sights Glock/ Kel-Tec Sub-2000 Sandwich

This low-profile 19x10x4-inch Cordura bag allows you to safely and securely transport a Kel-Tec Sub-2000, two Glock pistols and nine magazines. This makes for a handy range bag as well as a discreet carrying case for a very serious set of defensive tools and is available at skinersights.com. **MSRP: \$99**

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»THERE ARE SHOOTING RANGES

and there are ranges where you can train.

You should look for the latter, but we are often stuck with the former.

When I say “shooting” range, I am referring to the style of range frequented by old men wearing tweed jackets and braided leather suspenders. You will often see these guys shooting “bull’s eye targets” from a one-handed stance. A range like this typically has lots of rules about pistol shooting — crazy rules like: no drawing from the holster, no more than one shot per second and no moving while shooting. These rules keep you from training for all the things you really need to do in a self-defense situation.

But enough about what you can’t do. Let’s talk about how you can work within those oppressive rules to actually train for self-defense on a “shooting” range. I have a couple drills that will help you.

TABLE-TOP “DRAW”

If you can’t draw from the holster, perhaps you can “draw” from the top of your shooting bench. This little drill will teach you just about everything you need to know about getting on target quickly, except moving your cover garment and clearing leather. You will be forced to quickly acquire a firing grip, bring the pistol on target and complete the trigger press.

This drill works best with a partner and a shot timer. If you don’t have both, you can use one or the other. To set up this drill, first load and make ready. Then lay your pistol on the shooting table with the muzzle pointed downrange and the grip pointed to the side of your dominant hand. For a right-handed shooter, that means you will have the muzzle downrange and the grip pointed to the right.

On the command, grab the pistol with your strong hand, acquire a firing grip, bring your support hand into place as you acquire the target and fire as soon as your front sight is on the target.

Your shot timer can tell you how quickly you performed this action, as most have a timer that tells the elapsed time between the “beep” and the first shot. I would rather that you not focus on the “beep” as the





TRAINING WHERE YOU CAN'T TRAIN

» Some ranges will categorically disallow you from holstering or drawing a gun under any circumstances. As inconvenient as this is, it doesn't mean you have to settle for standing stagnant on the firing line; you can still train in a dynamic fashion to maximize your range time and better prepare yourself.



» No holster? No problem. Though not a true draw, accessing your sidearm from the tabletop works a lot of the same mental and physical processes as your standard from-cover drills.

signal to start fighting, but we are making do with bad situation here. We can discuss responses to pre-threat indicators in a future column.

As always, start slow for form and focus on making one solid, center-mass hit. Once you have the mechanics in place, you can start picking up speed.

I have found that getting the pistol up off the table can be more difficult than expected, as a quality holster presents the pistol so it is easy to grab the gripframe. To get the same effect on the table, I have found setting the pistol on a small sand bag gives a more realistic presentation.

Use this drill to help you quickly establish a two-handed firing grip and a sight picture as you pick up your "draw" speed. Fire only one round, and focus on making that one round count. You might only get one round in a gunfight.

ROLL OUT FROM COVER

No, you will not be doing acrobatics. You will simply be using your shooting station to practice shooting from behind cover but without the cover. You see, you don't really need the cover to practice using the positions to effectively shoot from behind it. There are two big rules about shooting from behind cover: 1. Stay back from the cover

about 3 to 5 feet, and 2. Don't lean out. Get a proper stance and "roll" out.

Let's start with standing. To make this easy we will assume you are right-handed and shooting around the right side of cover. That is the easiest place to start.

Your shooting stance will change from what you might consider normal in order to ensure the majority of your body stays behind the cover. Get in your normal shooting stance with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Now take about a half-step forward with your right foot. Come to full extension with your arms, flex your right knee slightly and "roll" forward, supporting your weight on your right foot and leg. As you do this, you will see your hands come a bit down and to your right as you "roll" slightly out the right side of the cover.

You want to practice this move so that when you actually get behind cover to try the real thing, your feet, legs and most of your torso remain behind the cover. Only your head, arms and hands (which are holding your gun) are exposed, thus offering your adversary a very small target.

Roll out, fire a shot on target and roll back. Now drop down on one knee, putting your left knee on the ground and again supporting your weight with your right foot. Execute the same drill from the kneeling

position. Roll forward and you will see your hands come a bit down and to the right, getting your gun around that cover. Aim and take the shot.

Shooting around the left side of cover is a simple matter of reversing your foot position. But a right-handed shooter firing around the left side of a barrier is faced with a dilemma. You can maintain your standard shooting grip, but if you do, you will need to expose more of yourself as you roll out. Going around the left side of the barrier is a bit more awkward. You can, if you feel comfortable, shoot left-handed. But this will require even more practice.

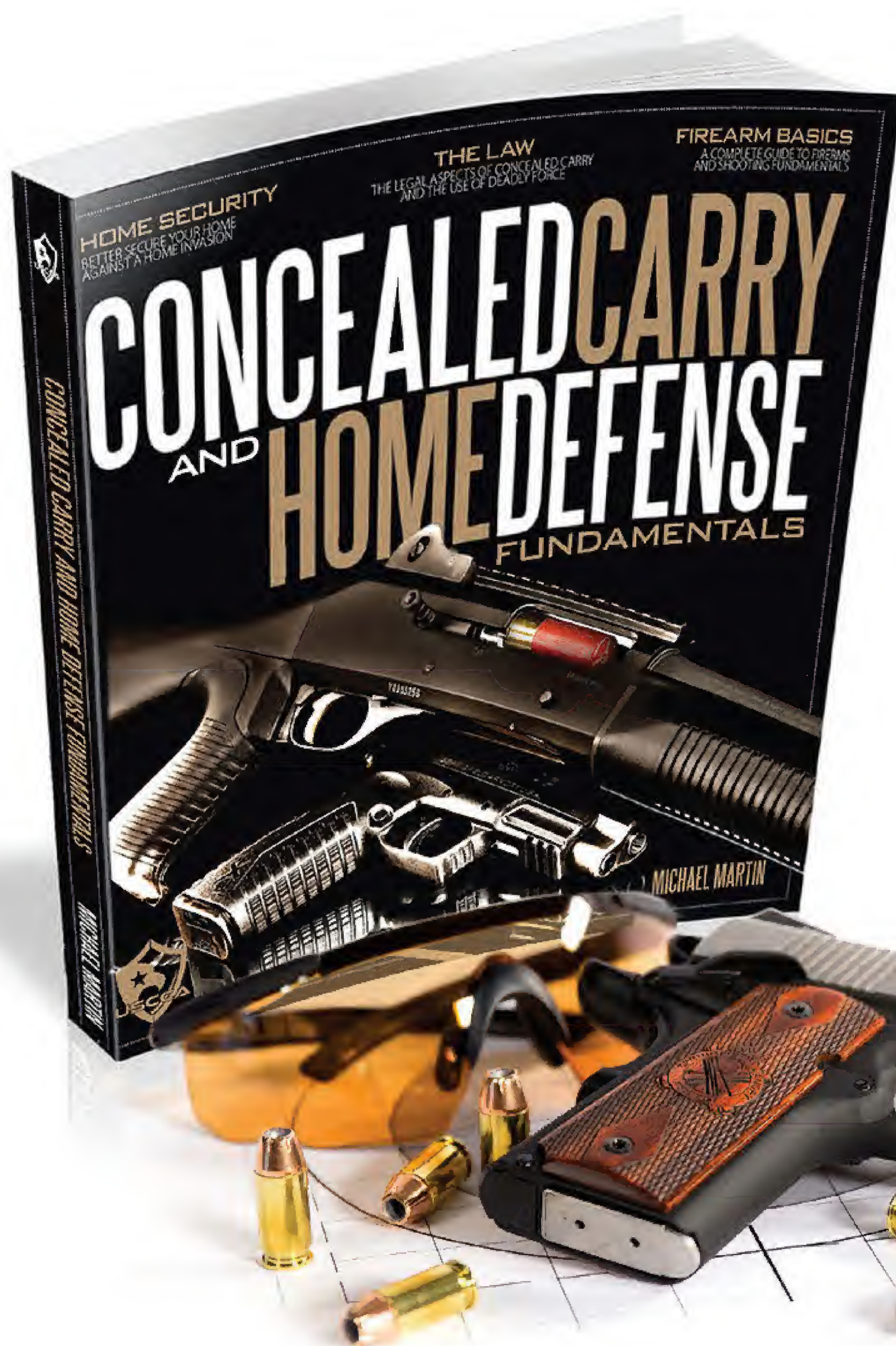
It is important to remember that you are doing this drill on the range and without cover only to learn the foot position and the motions and to experience the recoil of your weapon when firing from a different position. In order to master it, you will need to practice it from behind cover. You can conduct dry practice in your garage or basement by using a doorway, but eventually you will want to get to a range and put all the pieces together in a live-fire training sequence.

Stay safe. Train hard.



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I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT FASHION

or which clothes are the best for concealing a pistol, because that's going to be different for everybody. I don't even want to talk about which gun company has the coolest T-shirts to wear to the range. Instead, I want to talk about clothing and the way it can affect how safely you carry your firearm.

As this issue reaches your hands, we're turning the corner from spring into summer, and so I don't have to harp too much on my personal clothing-related safety bugbear, which is drawstrings, especially the kind that have the little plastic toggle adjusters on them. If clothing manufacturers wanted to deliberately design a garment to make people shoot themselves in the leg while holstering a gun, they'd have a hard time coming up with something better than the waist-level drawstring with plastic toggle. Mine have all had a date with a pair of scissors, because I don't look good in bullet holes.

I go on about sturdy, purpose-designed gun belts a lot too, but usually in the context of comfort and for the sake of a consistent draw; however, there's a safety issue there too. Too narrow or flimsy of a belt can cause the holster mouth to roll outward if you are trying to put the gun away and get it a little off-center. Your hand pushes down, the belt twists and the holster mouth rotates out, the gun starts to point in at your own waist ... fumble there and things could go south in a hurry. Get a good belt.

How about pockets? Pockets are awesome. Big pockets are really awesome because they can hold lots of stuff. But if what you put in that pocket is a gun, then the gun should be the only thing you put in that pocket. No pens, pencils, lip balm, lighters, multitools, keys, fat rolls of hundreds ... I understand that the carbon fiber pocket holster with genuine narwhal leather trim that you got for your Blastomatic Pocket 10mm is the best pocket holster ever, but if you don't think Murphy can get your pocket flotsam inside it and into the trigger guard, I don't think you're giving him enough credit.

Here's one that I have to watch out for: loose, lightweight cover garments. I love those "hiking" or "expedition" shirts from companies like Royal Robbins or Columbia. I buy 'em several sizes big and wear them unbuttoned as "gun burkhas." They're comfy, cool, keep the sun off and dry fast, but because of their lightweight flowing nature, I have to be extra careful to reach behind myself with my support hand and gather my shirttail off to one side and away from my holster when I want to put the gun away.

Remember, when it comes to your clothing choices when carrying a gun, safety is always in fashion.

BALLISTIC BASICS

ED COMBS
LEGALLY ARMED CITIZEN

IT'S JUST THE LAW | AFTER THE SHOT | DEFCON 1

COLORS & CLOTHES

STACK THE DECK



»IF THERE WAS ONE CORRECTIVE PHRASE I heard from my father more often than any other during my upbringing, I'm ashamed to admit that it was probably a loving but stern "pay attention."



THE HIGHWAYMEN OF OLD WERE NO DIFFERENT THAN THE ALLEY-DWELLING HYENAS THAT PLAGUE US TODAY: THEY ANNOUNCE THAT YOU WILL DO WHATEVER THEY SAY OR THEY WILL SPILL YOUR BLOOD.

He might have been trying to help me understand my math homework, teaching me how to field dress a deer or showing me how to change the washers in a bathroom sink, but the necessity for him to say it was always the same: My attention would start to drift off of the task at hand, resulting in less than optimal performance. I thank him for each and every last time he told me to “pay attention,” as it taught me an awful lot about following through on the task at hand.

When you are out in public, the task at hand is not just to travel somewhere but to travel there and arrive safely and in roughly the same condition as when you left. Ideally, this will be accomplished without interruptions from such modern trammels as traffic jams, missed trains or buses, getting comically splashed with mud by a taxi, or being set upon by a predator. This has been the case for centuries. Though romanticized by songwriters and lofty minded Renaissance Faire enthusiasts, the highwaymen of old were no different than the alley-dwelling hyenas that plague us today: They announce that you will do whatever they say or they will spill your blood. In response to this, we here at *Concealed Carry Magazine* regularly tell our readers to stay in Condition Yellow: alert and scanning for potential threats.

Do you have the right to walk down every alley off of Bourbon Street drunk as a gibbon

and counting off \$20 bills to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”? You certainly do. However, doing so would land you high in the running for what some callously refer to as a “Darwin Award” — recognition of an individual who displays such brash and borderline unbelievable disregard for common sense and self-preservation that their behavior basically gets them kicked off the planet.

Color-coding is nothing new to humans, but its application to the world of self-defense is rather novel. Renowned firearms instructor Jeff Cooper instituted them at his combat handgunning school back in the 1970s, and they spread from there to every corner of military, police and private citizen situational awareness training. Basically, it is a way for instructors and researchers to categorize the various states of human alertness from Condition White (absolutely oblivious to your surroundings) through Condition Yellow and Condition Orange all the way to Condition Red (making the decision that, if a detected threat continues, you are prepared to stop it).

Adult people bopping through life in permanent Condition White haven’t a care in the world except for whether there are any green ones left in their roll of Life Savers. Don’t get me wrong; they’re thinking about plenty of things, but nothing of actual consequence when it comes to keeping them

alive. Such behavior is what leads to the news stories we always feel a little bad about laughing at — the dope who walked into an open manhole while texting, the dunce who ran into traffic while yelling at a friend over her shoulder or the earbud-wearing dullard who lost a foot because he literally stepped onto a 12-foot alligator that was hissing at him as loud as it could. These individuals are kept alive by luck and the charitable actions of responsible adults.

The other end of the spectrum — permanent Condition Red — is fortunately less common. This is the crank that slaps leather at every mouse’s footstep and draws a rifle bead on anyone who approaches within 700 yards of his residence. I say “fortunately” because actual full-on violent paranoia is significantly more dangerous to everyone around the practitioner than someone who never pays any attention to anything they do (though, come to think of it, probably not by a wide margin).

Condition Yellow and Condition Orange should be the standard and elevated conditions for the average concealed carrier. Those conditions can be described as Alert and Alarmed, respectively, and for the purposes of this column, I’ll leave it at that. Long story short, always be Alert, because alertness can hip you to when you should be Alarmed. This is, in its crystalline form, what we mean when we reference “situational awareness.”

Situational awareness is not only a cornerstone of any successful Personal Protection Plan, it’s a trait that those who choose to employ a firearm to defend themselves and others need to possess in greater quantity than the average citizen. A lot of this, however, can be built into your PPP by doing — or not doing — certain things, and in order to stack the deck in your favor, I present to you my list of the worst situational awareness offenders.

HOODS

On the opening morning of my first white-tailed deer season, my brother and I were sitting bundled as tightly as possible against the freezing November dawn in our blaze-orange hooded parkas. Our father stood against a tree to our right, motionless in probably half a dozen layers of Woolrich, with nothing on his head but a thin deer-stalker-type hat. You might know the type. It’s basically a hat by only the slimmest of technicalities. Its tiny brim offers practically zero protection from the sun’s rays, and it is usually folded by the wearer to fit in a back pocket, resulting in its shape quick-

ly shifting to one not unlike the hat Daffy Duck wore when he was portraying Robin Hood. To put it simply, I have always found that they afford the wearer an extremely silly appearance.

But they were worn by basically every successful deer hunter my father's age. Why?

"I never wear a hood or a big hat because when you do, you can't see or hear anything," my dad said. "If you're wearing a hood or big hat, you may as well sit back and take a nap."

Put simply, literally hooking blinders over your head is about the worst thing you can do if your intent is to stay atop what is going on around you, let alone be able to react to it. I understand that hoods have been worn for millennia, and I understand that they are part of the traditional hunting raiment of dozens of indigenous peoples, but I am also forced to assume that this is because affordable knit caps were not available to medieval Sami huntsmen.

EARBUDS

Here's another one that is difficult for people who didn't grow up with them to understand: the individual who walks around actively not listening to anything going on around him — not just inattentive but intentionally plugging his ears and piping in noise that will cover anything else that the world might be trying to cue him in on. I understand how important personal electronic devices are to millions of Americans, especially those who spend a great deal of time on public transportation, but you need to try to minimize the time you make yourself vulnerable through their use.

PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

As above, it is now possible to walk down a street or sit on a train and become completely oblivious to anything and everything transpiring around you. Almost all of us have found ourselves engaged in an animated or intense phone conversation while in public, and I suppose that is to be expected now that it's basically impossible to "be out" and therefore duck a call. However, we also need to do all we can to maintain our personal security by striking a balance between staying in touch with those who we need to be able to reach and not becoming the turkey snoozing in a pine as the fisher creeps in.

MODERN SPORT SUNGLASSES

Whenever new members joined my unit at the Sheriff's Office, they would joke about the fact that I looked like a Deputy straight out of *Super Troopers*, right down to the mustache and Ray-Ban-style aviators. Usu-

ally years younger than I, they mostly wore the more modern style of sport sunglasses, complete with wraparound lenses and the big fat ear arms. Though skull-crushingly cool and often remnants of their overseas military service, such sunglasses have always been borderline useless to me as I find them to basically negate my ability to see anything past my 10 and 2.

Those *CHiPs*-style aviators aren't quite as goofy when you need to keep the sun out of your eyes while watching for drunken blindsides.

Many modern styles of sunglasses offer protection from the sun's rays and many are even safety-rated, but it is extremely import-

ant to never give up your ability to actually see what the heck is going on around you. If you're in the market for wraparounds, make sure the arms are thin enough to allow peripheral vision.

I would argue that situational awareness is tied only with actually carrying a self-defense weapon as the single most important element of a successful Personal Protection Plan. If you're the third or fourth one to know that you're in a lethal force encounter, all of the gear in the world might not be as useful as having been able to dodge the attack in the first place.



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» **IT WAS A BAD PHOTOGRAPH** that was very well done. It was technically perfect — lighting, shadows, framing — all perfect, all bad. It was designed to illustrate a newspaper profile on me. The local paper could not understand how an educated person could be a gun advocate and did a profile on me in order to horrify its readers.¹ The photo showed me holding a shotgun, one of the props from my self-defense video. This was perfectly accurate, but I read more books in a year than fire shotguns. I have more books than shotgun shells. It would have been more accurate to pile my gun books in front of me, and I could have held the shotgun behind that fortification.

A commentator on personal protection advises:

“... there are five books which should be required reading for anyone who carries a gun for self-defense. They are: *Cooper on Handguns* by Jeff Cooper; *Principles of Personal Defense*, also by Cooper; *Combat Handgunning* by Chuck Taylor; *In the Gravest Extreme* by Massad Ayoob; and *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* by Judith Martin. The latter book is more likely to save your life than the others. People get themselves shot for a lot of reasons — money, drugs, etc. — but mostly for wounded pride. If you are serious about avoiding trouble and staying alive, be polite. Neither Miss Manners nor Jeff Cooper approves of wagging your middle finger at people. Not only is it terrible manners, it's terrible tactics.”²

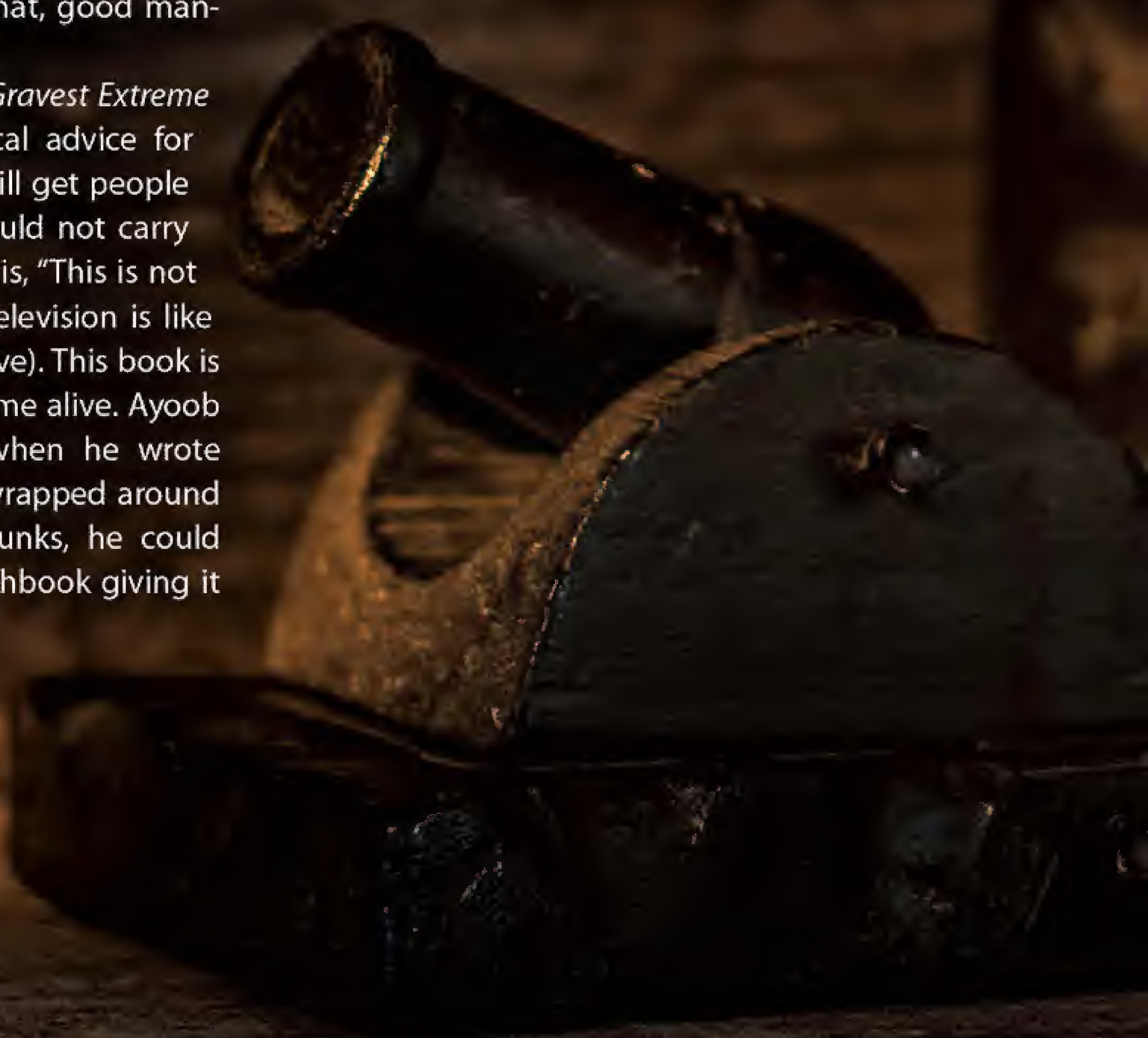
Miss Manners' Guide runs to 826 pages. Fortunately, it summarizes for our purposes as, “Do not make other people uncomfortable.” Simply by existing, guns and gun owners make some people uncomfortable. This is not fair, right or just. It just is. Good manners might keep a person out of trouble, and failing that, good manners play better in court.

Massad Ayoob's classic *In the Gravest Extreme* has provided good solid practical advice for 35 years. It is an overview that will get people thinking. If it does not, they should not carry a gun until it does. The message is, “This is not television, people.” If you think television is like reality, you will go to jail (if you live). This book is common sense on how to go home alive. Ayoob was denounced as a coward when he wrote that he carried a \$5 or \$10 bill wrapped around a matchbook. If harassed by punks, he could toss them the bill, with the matchbook giving it

enough ballistics to throw, and tell the punks to have a beer on him. They could go home and brag about how they got over on him. He could go home. No police investigation, no bail, no lawyers. A good day.

Jeff Cooper is one of the founders of the modern craft of defensive pistol shooting. Any of his books are valuable. Another pioneer of modern pistol shooting is Bill Jordan. Jordan's *No Second Place Winner* was first published in 1965 and is still read today. He discusses holsters and fitting the holster and grips before getting to combat considerations. The basics come first.

Jim Cirillo's *Guns, Bullets, and Gunfights* discusses the title subjects with the perspective of a man who triumphed in more gunfights than anyone else in modern times. Cirillo was on the New York Police Department Stakeout Squad, which laid in wait for criminals who could not understand the meaning of “Police, don't move!” He discusses gun and bullet selection, but his accounts of his gunfights are invaluable.



» Though we regularly state that training is essential to armed self-defense, never forget that training takes many forms. Reading up on theory, technique and the history surrounding defensive firearm use is not only extremely helpful, it's quite entertaining as well.



A book on your state's weapon and self-defense law is a very basic requirement. It demonstrates that you have done your due diligence and learned the rules. About 90 percent of the law on this subject is the same, but only 80 percent of the time. Some of that 10 or 20 percent is critical.

Ayoob writes a series of magazine articles for *American Handgunner* magazine called "The Ayoob Files." These dissect self-defense incidents by police and civilians to point out what went right and wrong. Smart people learn from their mistakes. Wise people learn from other people's mistakes.

At first glance, Scotty Phillips' *Justice Rendered* appears to be exclamation marks interspersed with words. It does a good job of recounting the events of various gunfights, the reactions of the victim, what went right or wrong and the aftermath. The real value is that all 12 of the incidents involve people who were forced to "draw against the drop" and prevailed. Some were under fire when they drew their gun. According to the author, this selection was a coincidence. It is a valuable rebuttal to people who claim that the criminal will take your gun away and use it on you.

Gavin DeBecker's books *The Gift of Fear* and *Protecting the Gift* stand for the proposition that if something makes you uneasy, there is a reason. Fear is hundreds of thousands of years of evolution or a benevolent God whispering, "There's a predator after you."³ They are valuable advice for identifying and dealing with predators great and small.

Michael Martin's *Concealed Carry and Home Defense Fundamentals* is one of the best books available on basic self-defense. Overwhelmingly illustrated, each photograph and drawing teaches a lesson in the guns, gear, legal considerations and physical/mental reactions relevant to self-defense.⁴

George P. Fletcher's *A Crime of Self-Defense* recounts Bernhard Goetz's attack by four thugs in the subway, his actions in self-defense and the legal and social aftermath. It stands for the proposition that you can do everything right during the gunfight and actions afterwards can get you criminally charged, sued and ruined. Goetz fled the scene and later spoke to police and prosecutors without a lawyer. He might have survived these errors but made racist statements. This took him right to the top of the prosecutor's hit parade. He beat the

murder charge, was sentenced to a year in jail for illegally possessing a gun⁵ and was sued for \$43 million. He lost.

A book on your state's weapon and self-defense law is a very basic requirement. It demonstrates that you have done your due diligence and learned the rules. About 90 percent of the law on this subject is the same, but only 80 percent of the time. Some of that 10 or 20 percent is critical. *Bloomfield Press* has the widest selection of state-specific books.⁶ The American Association of Certified Firearms Instructors has a short series of state-specific books. Each book contains chapters on selection of gun, ammunition and holsters. If you begin with no knowledge of these subjects, any of the books, regardless of state, can be a useful guide. The books focus on the practicality and the why and how of concealed carry.

Some state-specific books are little more than copies of statutes. Statutes change and court decisions might twist them beyond recognition. If an author does not have updates available, the book is of fleeting value. A website is the only practical way to update a book.

Subscription to a magazine that provides regular advice on legal, tactical and practical elements of self-defense is important, even critical.⁷ It shows an ongoing effort to keep up with changes in these fields.

Each gun owner is an ambassador for the Second Amendment and shooting community. Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* is a magnificent guide. It stands for the proposition that you do not influence people by lecturing them on what you think they should know. You influence people by finding out their interests and gently linking them to your message. A golfer might describe in mind-numbing detail his club selection, stance, ball, swing and all the environmental factors involved in putting a ball in a hole. The shooter can interject that he did much the same thing with his AR-15 but had to make the hole in a paper target himself and put the next 29 rounds through the same hole, along with sending all the tensions of his day downrange. These short stories are best.

They describe why we shoot, why we have 30-round magazines and the pleasure derived from the skill.

Gun owners might have to explain the Second Amendment to ignorant and hostile people. A student needs a primer. The *Second Amendment Primer* is a true primer. It presents the case for the Second Amendment as an individual right.

There are an impossible number of pages written on the Second Amendment. These can be reviewed in the decisions in the Heller and McDonald Supreme Court cases and their briefs and amicus briefs, but most people have a life. The *Primer* is not short, but it covers a great deal of territory in a volume about the size of a pocket New Testament.

Police officers must take continuing police education classes. Prosecutors must take continuing legal education classes.⁸ It plays better with the first decision makers to show refresher training. Refresher classes are best, but self-study is available to all. If things go very bad, you can wave a book in court and proclaim, "This is what I was taught to do."⁹ Acting in accordance with professional advice is a long step down the path to proof of acting reasonably.

Please send questions to Kevin L. Jamison, 2614 NE 56th Ter, Gladstone, MO 64119-2311 or KLJamisonLaw@earthlink.net. Individual answers are not usually possible but might be addressed in future columns.

This information is for legal information purposes and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions, you should consult a qualified attorney.

ENDNOTES

(1) I received some wonderful hate mail. (2) Mark Moritz, "Speed, Power, Accuracy," *COMBAT HANDGUNS*, April, 1984 page 42 at 44. (3) It could be both. (4) The author is connected to a nearby magazine, but I did not realize that when I bought the book. (5) He served eight months. (6) www.bloomfieldpress.com. 4848 E. Cactus, #505-440 Scottsdale, AZ 85254. (7) A nearby magazine is an excellent choice. (8) So do defense lawyers. (9) DVDs and websites will have to wait for another time.





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YOUR LAST ROUND OF AMMO IS YOUR LAWYER

THE FINAL SALVO IN YOUR DEFENSE IS WORDS

»IT'S A PRETTY SAFE GUESS that everyone reading this magazine owns a few pounds of ammo — and I'm being nice about that. Some of you have enough to qualify as an Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site, am I right?

Despite your readiness though, it's also a pretty safe bet that too many *Concealed Carry Magazine* readers don't have that closing defensive shot in their arsenals — the one in a three-piece suit, which is as critical as primer and powder for after you shoot.

Lawyers can be a strange breed. They're just people, only not. They think differently. They're highly logical, tending to think in syllogisms. I run into them all the time in my line of work, but you? Maybe not so much, or at all.

Dealings with them can sometimes be at arms length and are usually unlike any other human interactions you experience. There's that billing rate — in three figures — the legalese (but at least that's in Latin) and the (supposed) difference in brain

power, not to mention the levers of power in their halls of justice (where the only justice is in the halls, as Lenny Bruce put it). Speedy trial? Not when you bill by the hour.

But if you're going to carry, which means you've considered the possibility of using a firearm for self-defense, then you need access to one of those lawyers as much as you need all that lead and brass that's currently making your floorboards creak.

WILL YOU CHOOSE TO BE SMART?

Now, you can do things last-minute and ask the police coming to arrest you for a lawyer. Even if you've acted impeccably in a shooting, you'll need one. Police do have a



» "Defending yourself" takes many forms, and the most rigorous phase of a self-defense situation often takes place after the shooting stops. Your lawyer will be your most important asset when the time comes to prove that you were left with no choice but to fight back.

tendency to arrest suspects at the scene, especially the one with the still-warm sidearm. But asking the guy hauling you off for legal representation might not be the best game plan. Among other things, the best lawyers generally don't practice (at least for very long) in the help-I-don't-have-a-lawyer department of public defenders' offices. Coincidentally, this is the office the police will call for you.

Learning you've desperately asked the police to get you a lawyer you don't have will be taken as a clue. It tells law enforcement you are ill-prepared for what comes next: the legal hurt locker. It sets up the, "We're the police, and we're here to help you" routine. "Just spill your guts to us, and since you're obviously a good guy involved in a perfectly righteous shooting, you have nothing to fear, so just come clean and everything will go just fine."

Watch for those dangerous 10 words those officers might (or might not) have already quickly read to you: "Everything you say can and will be used against you." An arresting officer will also ask, "Do you understand the statement I've just read to you?" Remember to answer that with an emphatic (but polite), "No." Because, of course, you have no idea what all the implications of that are, and you want that on the record. And by now, you should start to understand me calling your lawyer your "last round of self-defense ammo."

Now, USCCA has a service you can just sign up for and be done with this. And to avoid shilling for my publisher here, you know there are other services, so check them out too and do your due diligence; protecting your freedom is worth a few Internet searches. That said, you'll want a formal sit-down with your lawyer, a consultation to get to know them as a person and to start asking questions. If, God forbid, you ever end up in the head-spinning tornado of the aftermath of a

shooting, it should not be your virgin experience with all this. (You'll also find out if the attorney in question is any good. Like doctors, teachers and Presidents, not all of them are.)

THE MONEY ANGLE

Here's a trick for dealing with the billing rate: Arrange your initial consultation with two friends. Many lawyers will meet briefly for free, but that's not long enough in my opinion. The three of you will take better notes, ask better questions, the lawyer sees three potential clients, you all end up "having" a lawyer (get cards!), and you split the bill — a big savings. Your restaurant debriefing (immediately afterward while it's fresh) is invaluable.

You will find this lawyer through the USCCA, word of mouth, gun shows or your state gun clubs. You might have to do it twice, because the first person might be a clown (it happens). Now you're the most prepared marksman in your orbit, and others come to you for advice.

Just don't become a jailhouse lawyer yourself; you definitely only know enough to be dangerous. Study and read extensively to reduce your exposure. Remember this first new rule of gun safety before you drop the hammer: You might have to write a check for your life savings to your defense attorney.

Take good care of your lawyer. Invite the person to the local machine-gun shoot or the open-carry dinner. They love it! They might not go, but it facilitates your next phone call at no charge. Gun ownership and gun lawyering is a two-way street. It benefits both. When you learn about some new threat to your rights, bird dog the info. It helps cement the relationship.

With proper care and feeding, you'll have a partner for life, and one great new round of ammo.

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS SAY?

2016 ...

With the 2016 presidential candidates already cranking up their campaign machines, here at the USCCA, we feel it's not too early to be looking at the political landscape. And the very fact that you are reading this publication indicates that you are probably a gun owner and, almost as likely, that you are a man or woman who carries a firearm for personal protection.

Thus you and I have an even greater stake in the outcome of every election than the average citizen who doesn't own a gun. Which brings up a question: How many Americans own guns, and are their numbers rising or falling? And perhaps even more important: How does the average American feel about guns today?

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates of the total number of guns in America runs between 250 million and 300 million. But getting reliable statistics on who owns them has always been difficult to pin down, especially by household.

For example, the Gallup organization has tracked rising gun ownership rates over the last decade or so. Meanwhile, the General Social Survey (GSS) has indicated a decline over the same period in the number of households owning at least one gun. Obviously, they can't both be right, so why the disparity?

First, since the vast majority of states do not require registration of firearms (thank-

fully), most experts and researchers have to rely on "self-reporting" surveys. Such methods not only require extrapolating gun ownership based on relatively small sample sizes, they have the built-in problem of needing to rely on the honesty of the survey participants.

Gallup is well known by most Americans as a private organization that is not affiliated with the government. As a result, survey participants are more likely to be forthcoming with their answers, yielding more accurate information.

But while the GSS is also a private survey company, it is often perceived as somehow connected to government by those they contact. This is often enough to cause even the most trusting gun owner to question whether or not "honesty is the best policy."

I myself have known more than a few people who admit that they simply either refused to answer gun survey questions or outright denied owning firearms. In light of the revelations about the IRS targeting of private individuals and political groups and the NSA spying scandals, it isn't hard to understand why someone might just be even more cautious than ever.

Second, the biases of the researchers in any survey can, even unintentionally, nudge the methodology toward a predetermined conclusion. As the saying goes, you tend to find what you're looking for. And the GSS is known to be staffed by people with a strong bias in favor of gun control.

According to author John Lott, GSS Director Tom Smith once quipped that lower gun ownership rates would "make it easier for politicians to do the right thing on guns" and pass more restrictive regulations (*The Bias Against Guns*, Lott, et al.). An attitude like Smith's justifiably invites a certain degree of skepticism.

Even more interesting is that the parent organization of the GSS — the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) — receives significant funding from the Joyce Foundation, which has long supported organizations that promote increased gun control. Given such an association, it isn't hard to see how the GSS "research" could be tailored, even if unconsciously, to produce the results they (and the Joyce Foundation) desire.

But there are other ways to gauge gun ownership, and more importantly, the attitudes of Americans toward guns, whether they own guns or not. This is important, since non-gun-owners vote too.

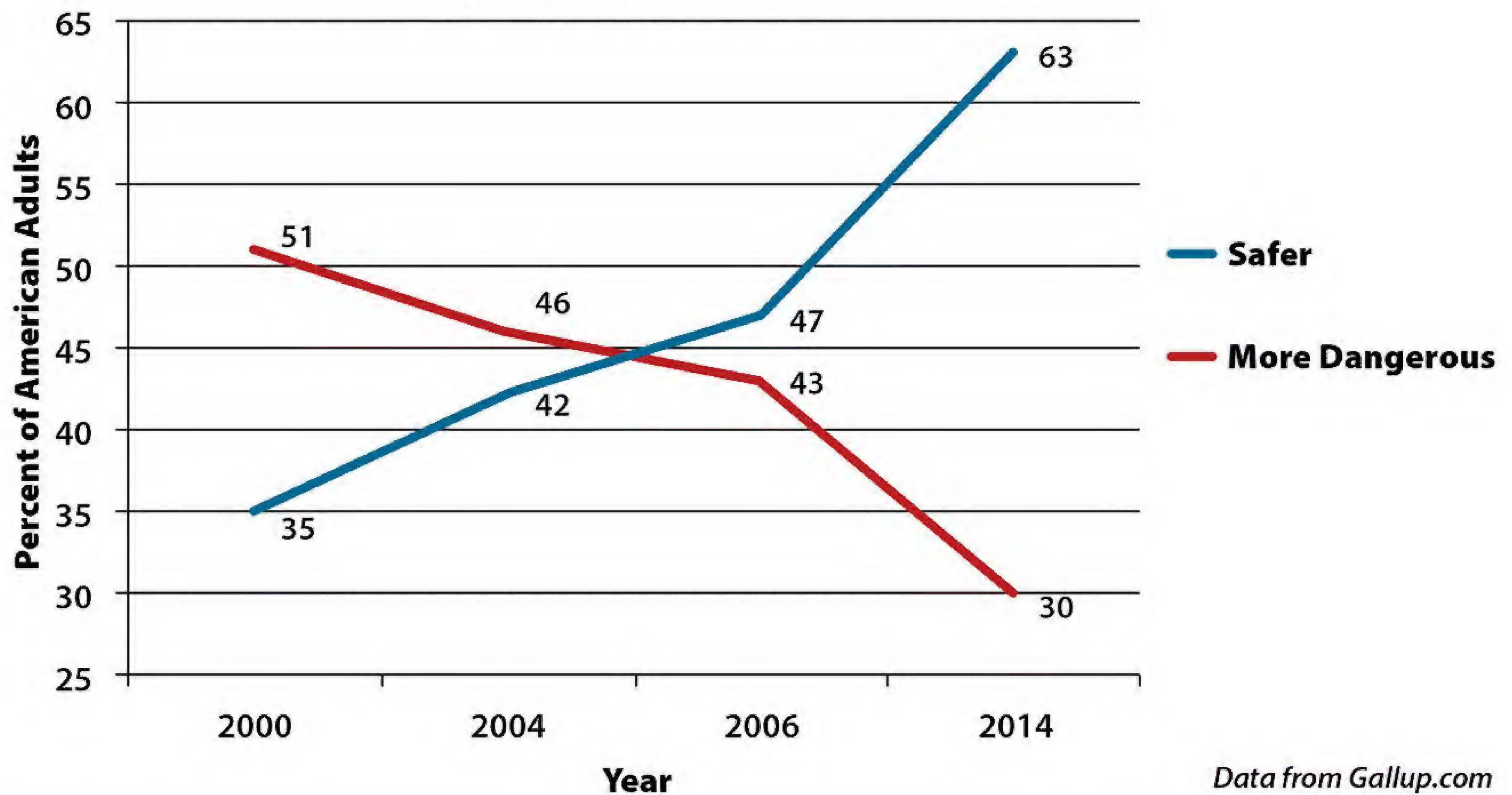
One of the best indicators of the rate at which Americans are purchasing guns is the number of background checks run by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Unlike surveys, this is an actual concrete number, since the checks are run for every retail transaction involving a firearm. And while transfers between private parties are not included, the NICS numbers are a solid indicator of current trends.

And numbers over the last few years are striking. From a previous and stable figure of around 8 million per year from 2000 through 2006, NICS checks soared to an all-time high of over 14 million in 2009. Since the inauguration of President Obama in 2009, there has been a record 71 million new firearms purchases. Just this past Christmas season, "Black Friday" of 2014 recorded the most NICS checks in a single day in history. Given this huge increase in gun sales, especially handguns, along with more people than ever before



**ELECTIONS
AHEAD**

Do Guns Make Homes Safer?



now carrying guns for self-defense, it is simply difficult to believe that fewer people own guns today than in years past.

However, if you listen to the "mainstream" (read: anti-gun) media, while sales are up, the actual number of gun owners is falling. From CNN to the *New York Times*, the official narrative is that fewer people own guns today than in years past and the increases are due to people like you and me adding to our existing collections.

But a wide range of people close to the action, from firearms instructors to owners of gun stores and distributors of firearms accessories, all report that a significant percentage of new sales are to first-time buyers. In 2014, California residents alone bought over a half million new handguns.

As a firearms instructor myself, I can verify that an increasing number of my students are people who have never owned a gun before. Some merely want to have a gun in their home and want to learn safe handling and basic shooting skills. But many more are eager to get a permit to carry.

Even more significant, especially politically, is the increasing percentage of women in the ranks of new gun purchasers reported by owners of gun stores. And here again, discussions with trainers like myself reveal a startling change in the composition of our carry classes. Every new woman shooter is another potential pro-gun voter.

This phenomenon is clearly reflected in the national figures for concealed carry per-

mits/licenses. The number of people carrying guns for self-defense has more than doubled, from about 4.6 million in 2007 to over 9.3 million at the beginning of 2013.

Another good indicator of societal attitudes is the public's support for gun control, which has been declining steadily. Pew Research polls for the period 1993 through 2014 clearly show that a majority of people now oppose gun control.

Particularly interesting to political wonks like us is the Gallup survey which asked: "Do Guns Make Homes Safer?" The change from 2000 to 2014 has been a dramatic, complete reversal.

What these various indicators all show is that American attitudes toward guns have definitely been tilting steadily in favor of gun ownership and away from gun control measures. This has come about as a result of a confluence of disparate factors in American society and the world at large.

Terrorism is certainly an element. There is an increasingly wide-ranging fear that organized terror groups will attack American cities. Given the damage done by "lone wolf" jihadists at Fort Hood and the Boston Marathon, the fear is not groundless.

Then there is ISIS, whose radical Islamist leaders have openly announced their desire to bring their jihad to American soil. Their videos of beheadings and other horrific images, such as the Syrian pilot who was doused with gasoline and burned alive, simply reinforce fears.


Claims by the Obama administration that such concerns are unwarranted and due only to "overblown" media coverage do little to reassure an increasingly skeptical public. And even if the probability of any individual being caught in such an attack is less than the odds of being hit by lightning, the average person's response is, "Yeah, but every year people do get hit by lightning."

Social unrest is another disturbing element for a lot of people. The riots that erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, following the shooting of Michael Brown were televised across the nation. After watching videos of stores being attacked and cars overturned and burned, it's not hard to see how someone who doesn't own a gun might consider getting one.

What all of this means is that 2016 has the potential for being a win for gun owners. But be warned: We have seen how quickly things can change for the worse. All it takes is for "our side" to get complacent. Remember that the only thing that has prevented the Obama Administration from enacting their anti-gun agenda has been the relentless efforts of actively involved gun owners — people like you.

As we get closer to election time, we at the USCCA will look closer at the national candidates. At the same time, we suggest you keep a sharp eye on your state and local politicians who are up for reelection. The price of liberty ...





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A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved top, a light-colored patterned skirt, and black high-heeled shoes, is walking on a rooftop. She is smiling and looking to her right. She is carrying a black and white patterned clutch bag. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and trees under a clear sky. The text 'WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY' is overlaid on the right side of the image in large, bold, black letters.

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

**CONCEALED CARRY &
FASHION FOR WOMEN**

■ BY ANETTE WACHTER



» A generation ago, there were basically no holsters designed for women. If they wanted to carry concealed firearms, they had to work around holsters that were designed for and by men. Today, women are not only more interested in concealed carry than ever before, they have more options for comfortably concealing sidearms than at any other point in history.

CALLING ALL WOMEN!

There are no longer any excuses for you to not carry concealed; you can look fashionable and carry at the same time. On- or off-body concealed carry has never been more fashionable or practical.

Designed by women for women, there are many great options for us to choose from now. Gone are the days of the bulky OWB holsters built for men or the frightening concealed carry vest. Frankly, I'd rather poke my eyes out with a fork than wear the latter. We also no longer have to wear loose-fitting clothing or layers to hide our handguns.

I live in an urban environment where current fashion is part of the lifestyle. I carry daily and I want to look good doing it. Although my holster choices work with my clothes, I want them to be practical and safe as well. For the last several years, I have been testing as many of the products as I can as fast as they come out. I have boxes of rejects, and the options that passed my tests are the ones I use daily. I love that I can wear fitted clothes and dresses and no one's the wiser that I am carrying.

I recently gave a speech about concealed carry at a ladies' event. I was wearing a fitted tank top and pencil skirt with high heels. It was not until the end of the talk that I revealed that I was wearing not one but three guns concealed on me. The room fell apart. Not that I would normally wear that many guns at once, but my point was made: Women can do this now.

All of the products I mention here are designed and manufactured by women. Whether you are wearing pants, skirts or dresses, there are options for you.

ON-BODY CARRY

Of all of the holsters I have, I mostly wear the FlashBang Holster or the AVA IWB Holster designed by Lisa Looper of the Looper Brand. I wear jeans and T-shirts a lot, so these two options are easy and comfortable.

It is well known now that the FlashBang is a bra holster. The holster straps around the middle front of a bra and is meant for smaller subcompact guns. It does take some getting used to. At first, it is alarming knowing the muzzle is right under your breast. But the holster covers almost the entire gun and, no matter how much movement or fidgeting you might do, the gun is safely concealed. If needed, you can reach under the shirt and with a quick snap down you can draw the gun from the holster. With practice, it is a very fast way to access your firearm. I love this holster. It is available for \$49.99 at flashbangstore.com.

The AVA, also by Looper designs, is the most comfortable IWB holster I have worn. I'm not sure if I should admit this, but I often forget I am wearing it. Lisa designs all of her holsters for the shape of women's bodies. No matter your size, she has something that will work for you. The AVA has a colorful suede lining that does not get sweaty against your skin. Like the FlashBang, you can choose the brand of gun to fit in left- or right-handed

options. It is available for \$59.99 at flashbangstore.com.

Wearing skirts and dresses used to mean going without an on-body holster. Not anymore. An option that works for dresses and skirts is the amazing lace thigh holster made by Femme Fatale out of Texas. Femme Fatale makes corset and ankle lace holsters as well. This really is a fun and sexy accessory that has a function. The thigh holster is a wide elastic band that has extremely sticky silicone grippers at the top and bottom of the holster.

I wear the Femme Fatale lace thigh holster often, and it has not lost its grip; it really stays on, even over stockings. There is a wide pocket the gun slips into, and it will not slip out. The pocket is meant to be worn on the inside of the thigh.

At first, I thought carrying a gun this way would drive me nuts. You know you are wearing it; I will not deny that. But you get used to it, and you can still walk normally. This is not, however, for your full-sized 1911 — subcompact is the way to go. The holster is available for \$70 at femmefatalerholsters.com.

Another great option for wear with skirts or pants are the compression shorts by UnderTech. (You can't really attach an IWB holster to a skirt.) The compression shorts are tight-fitting and have pockets at the back on the left and right sides. I will wear this with skirts, but mostly I wear the holster with sweatpants for when I walk my dog. I trust the holster to jog with as well, as the elastic band holds a gun very snugly. They come in a three-pack set for \$99.99 at undertechundercover.com.

My most recent test holster is a corset-style unit by Anna Henry of Dene Adams. I have seen this out for a while, but I just thought it looked like something that was not functional. I was pleasantly surprised by how nice it was to wear, and it is much more concealable than I had thought.

This ultra-feminine and slimming corset is a compression holster worn around the waist. The inside lining is very soft, and the corset is really cozy. Again, this is meant to hold a subcompact or micro pistol in a left- or right-side pocket at the stomach.

From looking at the holster, I thought it would be too bulky to wear with a T-shirt and that I might need a looser fitting top or sweater. I was wrong again. Except for very fitted or light-colored tops, it worked with most any shirt. You can position it as high or low on the waist as you would like for ease of retrieving the gun. Corset holsters come in several great colors and are available in a lace or plain lycra. Prices start at \$101 at deneadams.com.



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OFF-BODY CARRY

I used to cringe when I would see concealed carry purses in gun stores. They looked like fanny packs gone bad: They were made from horrible materials, and the only color option was brown. To be honest, my first choice is on-body carry. I do not usually carry a gun in my purse, but once in a while, I need to. At least now I am not embarrassed to show off my CC purse or computer bag. In fact, I like them so much I use them as everyday bags even without firearms in them.

Susan Kushlin of Gun Girls, Inc. designs and offers a large line of women's firearm accessories. I found the greatest camouflage clutch with gold studs on her site. I carry this purse all of the time; it has a hidden center gun pocket that closes with zippers and is accessible while carrying the handbag on your left or right side. The pocket runs the height and length of the bag and has Velcro on both walls of the pocket, holding the velcro-covered holster in place. It can be carried as a clutch but also has a removable shoulder strap. This is a small purse — about 12 by 8 inches — so the size of the pistol you carry will determine how much extra girl stuff you can keep in there. It is not real

leather, but it looks great and that keeps the price affordable. You can buy the purse for \$55.95 at countryoutfitter.com.

Last year at SHOT Show, a friend gave me a bag that had her company logo on it. I thought it was a perfect-sized computer bag and have been using it as such ever since. Turns out it is actually a range bag made by OffHand Gear, which is owned and operated by Sandi Dee outside of Phoenix. The bag is clever, practical and super cute.

Called The NORB (No Ordinary Range Bag), it is available in several pattern options. There is an exterior ambidextrous zipper to reach the gun without having to open the flap, and I love the stretchy, rifle-sling-inspired shoulder strap. (The NORB can also be unfolded and used as a range pad.) The bag stays slim while having room for a large wallet, touch-up makeup, hair ties, a phone and, of course, everything you need for the range — pistols, mags, ammo, eyes, ears and even your cleaning kit. Or, as in my case, a small laptop fits too. The NORB can be found on Sandi's site at offhandgear.com and is priced at \$129.

For the ultimate high-fashion concealed carry statement, you have to check out a

new line of purses from Beau+Arrow, a line designed by Betty and Iris Yen. These two ladies have deep roots in the New York and Los Angeles fashion worlds and have designed a high-end line of concealed carry purses.

I was able to test a beautiful leather bag called Annie. Made of matte white Kobe leather and also available in black, brown and maroon, this bag has impeccable details. You get what you pay for: The quality is amazing and the purses are gorgeous. The Annie has an exterior gun pocket accessible by zippers on either side and comes with a holster that is attached with Velcro inside the pocket.

The Annie purse is oversized — 12.5 inches high, 18 inches wide and 6 inches deep — and can be used as an overnight bag. It has four gold feet that keep the bottom of the bag in perfect condition ... did I mention this thing is gorgeous? For your next splurge, go to shopbeauarrow.com. The Annie goes for \$595.



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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a spent bullet. The bullet is silver with a copper-colored tip and a visible firing pin impression. The background is a dark, out-of-focus pile of many other similar bullets, creating a sense of abundance and choice. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic textures and the hand's grip.

DO I REALLY NEED SPARE AMMO?

**IT'S A MATTER OF
PERSONAL PREFERENCE**

■ BY STEVE COLLINS





» **I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE SAY THEY DIDN'T WANT MORE AMMO.** Ever since I started learning about guns and defensive shooting, we've always been told to carry at least one reload and more if possible. I think that traditionally we did this because that was the standard loadout for the .45 ACP 1911 — gun and two spare magazines — and gun people are nothing if not traditional.

Today though, with the advent of modern service pistols such as Glocks, the Springfield XD and XD/M, and the Smith & Wesson M&P series, we have incredibly reliable sidearms that hold a significant amount of ammunition. When we look at the dynamics of violent encounters in the civilian sector, it is the rare incident that requires the shooter to reload at any time during the fight. Also, for a great many people, the ability to carry anything more than the gun and what's in it is nullified by where they work or other personal circumstances. So, with a gun that carries 15 rounds or more, is it really that important to carry a spare magazine?

The incident that brought this to mind was as follows: A friend of mine who is an off-duty deputy sheriff narrowly avoided what could have been another Ferguson-style incident the other night in Springfield, Missouri. Four black males tried to accost him and some of his friends downtown, but my friend managed to get away before it became violent. (In all likelihood, these same four individuals were probably involved in the vicious beating of another white couple a few minutes after this incident.)

Which brings me to my point: During the incident, my friend was wondering if the eight rounds in his carry gun were going to be enough to deal with four dedicated attackers and possibly more close by. He is not

an average shooter; he is an outstanding marksman. His tactics and skill sets are top-notch. So, if he was thinking about this, what does that say for the rest of us?

PRIORITIES

In order to effectively defend ourselves and our families, we must be armed. Always carrying your gun needs to be the No. 1 priority. We also must be mentally prepared to use that gun, so getting our head right is pretty important as well. In terms of equipment, what would come next?

For most of us, a good high-quality flashlight, such as one made by Surefire, 5.11 or Streamlight, would be next, and a blade of some type from a reputable hard-use manufacturer, such as Cold Steel, Spyderco or Ka-Bar, would follow. Pepper spray is a great non-lethal option to keep handy. With all this stuff on us, how do we fit in something we'll probably need even less, like an extra magazine, a speedloader or a speed strip? In training beginner students, I find that most of them will barely carry the gun on a regular basis, much less anything else. So, how important is it really?

The usual arguments against carrying a spare magazine range from "It's too inconvenient" to "I carry enough crap as it is" to "What are you, some kind of mall ninja?" to more rational arguments, such as "Since most engagements are over in a few rounds, and I've got 18 on board, it's gonna be done one way or the other before my magazine is empty."

In an attempt to ascertain a reasoned answer, I sought well-versed opinions. These ranged from the folks I hang out with (all gun people of various experience) to the brain-trust of one of my normal online forums to two of the most trusted and respected names in the firearms training industry. What I got could be modestly deemed a wide divergence of opinions.

NOBODY AGREES 100 PERCENT

One of my local associates, an all-around gun guy and a gunsmith who has attended training classes, was of the opinion that in the case of a gun that holds a lot of ammo,

such as the Glock 17 9mm or his Springfield Armory XD .45 ACP, the on-board capacity of the gun would probably suffice for much of what the average person might encounter. Considering the environment most folks are in, that would be a reasonable assumption.

Another associate, who has trained at Front Sight and works in the firearms industry, stated that you should always have at least one extra reload on hand, and preferably more. His reason was fairly succinct: You simply don't know what kind of fight you'll be involved in. It might be a simple one-on-one affair; then again, you might find yourself in the middle of the next Mumbai, India or Nairobi, Kenya Westgate Mall mass murder.

I selected the actionable, reasonable information from the smarter folks on the online forum I frequent (Total Protection Interactive). Several of them are active or former law enforcement and some are nationally known trainers with deep databases to draw from. One of them, who studied more than 4,000 civilian shooting incidents, found that only a handful required a reload somewhere in the process. The rest of them were able to finish with whatever they had in the gun, whether it was a five-shot revolver or a multi-shot semi-auto. That's pretty telling information. There were a few who felt that most problems could be solved if people had better verbal disengagement skills and could pick up on cues from the bad guys before the fight even started. Being able to do this was, in their minds, much more important than more ammo.

WHAT DO THE BIG NAMES THINK?

I contacted two well-known instructors in the industry — with whom I have trained and for whom I have immense respect — to get their opinions on the matter.

John Farnam, who runs Defense Training, Int'l, has been in the training business for longer than many of us have been alive. He is truly a legend in the firearms community and one of the finest and most humble trainers I've had the privilege to study under.

"I think you can make the argument that a 14- or 17-shooter is already reloaded," Farnam said. "On the other hand, five-to-eight-shooters are going to run out pretty quick. We teach reloading as an emergency procedure in any event, but I know many people who carry G19s and no spare magazine. I still recommend a spare, but it may not always be possible, as you noted.

"So, are you going to die a horrible, flam-

ing death if you don't have spare ammo? Possibly not, but more rounds never hurt."

Massad Ayoob had a different take on it. As the lead instructor for Lethal Force Institute and now the Massad Ayoob Group, Ayoob is also one of the elder statesmen in the training world. His depth of knowledge on the legal system and the aftermath of violent encounters, plus his shooting skill and firearms knowledge, make him one of the most sought after trainers around.

He made special mention of the gunfights of Los Angeles jeweler Lance Thomas, who survived multiple exchanges of fire against multiple assailants, killing five. He fired 10 rounds or more in his three final gunfights, learning after his first one that the five shots in his Smith & Wesson Model 36 .38 Special weren't enough. He went to semi-autos with more rounds in them and had several guns stashed throughout his store. If there was ever an argument for having more ammo, this would be it. Remember, Lance Thomas wasn't a police officer or a Special Operations soldier; he was a businessman, a jeweler, an average person, like most of us.

Ayoob also mentioned the fact that in a struggle for the gun, sometimes the magazine catch gets pushed, releasing the magazine in the gun. It'd be kind of nice to have a replacement magazine under such a circumstance. (The times I've trained with either man, I've noticed they each have at least one spare magazine on them, along with a second gun.)

FINAL THOUGHTS

I had a somewhat difficult time writing this article. How do I make sure I don't come off sounding like a condescending jerk or, worse, a politician?

I think that your own personal situation and training will dictate what you do. The more you train, the more physically and mentally prepared you'll want to be. That might mean carrying a spare magazine, a spare gun, medical equipment or having nothing but the gun and what's in it and maintaining as high a state of situational awareness as humanly possible.

Having the necessary equipment is important. But, as the gunfights of Lance Thomas illustrated, having the will to win the fight is even more important. In the end, you'll have to live, or not, with your decision.



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DRAWING PRAISE

■ BY BOB CAMPBELL

COVER6 HOLSTERS

» WHEN IT COMES TO PERSONAL DEFENSE, there is a great deal of emphasis on purchasing the right handgun. Quality and reliability are important and so is caliber. We perhaps give too much attention to the load, custom grips and other accessories. By the same token, we often do not spend enough time in choosing a holster for concealed carry.

The handling qualities of an ergonomically designed handgun are a moot point if the holster does not present the handgun at a proper draw angle. Worse, if the handgun is uncomfortable to carry, then the handgun might not be carried at all. I am certain that the primary reason folks choose a small and ineffective handgun is that a larger handgun is perceived as uncomfortable to carry. With proper holster selection, the carry of a compact but effective handgun is not only comfortable, but the user has a better chance of rapid deployment due to the full-sized grip. We do not wish to spend as much on the holster as the handgun, but an inexpensive fabric holster just won't get the job done. Some handguns are supplied with plastic holsters that are useful for range work, but real thought and a reasonable amount of money should go into a concealed carry holster.

A quality holster should cost about the same as a good pair of shoes, and we all know what a pain a poorly fitting pair of shoes can be. The holster must offer good retention. The handgun must be held firmly in place during our daily movements. The holster must also offer access by offsetting the handgun from the body to allow clearance for the gun hand. A good draw angle is also necessary.

A poorly designed handgun holster will crowd the body, pinch nerves, shift on the belt and become a chasing nuisance rather than an advantage. A holster with the wrong cant or angle will present difficulty in drawing the firearm. These are real problems but not insurmountable.



» These Cover 6 IWBs demonstrate the variety of size options available in the Cover 6 line. Hybrid IWBs are also available.

The problem is often providing a quality product with good fit and finish at an affordable price. I took a hard look at how one innovative company addresses common issues with handgun holsters. I have recently finished a month long evaluation of Cover 6 Gear holsters and find much to recommend.

The initial evaluation was of leather inside-the-waistband (IWB) holsters. Leather

remains a popular material that is well suited for concealed carry. I obtained three IWB holsters: one for the 2-inch-barrel Smith & Wesson 442, another for the Glock 42 .380 ACP and another for the SIG P-series 9mm.

Initial evaluation shows good tanning of the leather and attention to detail in the stitching. The holsters were shipped packed with newspaper to maintain the shape. The

Cover 6 carries the handgun deep in the holster, which is ideal for concealed carry. The trigger guard is covered, there is good retention as the fit is snug and the holster is properly molded to the individual handgun.

Over time, the holster hugs the handgun and the body. Some leather holsters will demand a modest break-in period, and this is true of the Cover 6 Gear models. The handgun must be retained by the fit of the holster until you make a conscious decision to draw the handgun.

A big issue is concealment. The IWB holster is concealable, but the holster must also offer good retention. The Cover 6 Gear holster is rigidly attached to the belt by a spring steel belt clip. One of our test crew commented that the belt clip really takes a bite out of the belt. While there is a certain easy-on and easy-off angle not found with belt loops, the spring steel belt clip requires a little work to remove the holster from the belt. This is as it should be.

When wearing the three holsters alternately, each seemed comfortable enough, partly due to the use of supple leather in their construction and partly due to the geometry of the design. The holsters do not feature a holstering welt or reinforced mouth; however, the thick, waxed leather allows reholstering after the handgun is drawn with modest effort. The edging is good, and the glue and stitching are well done.

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The advantage of these holsters over any other is in the adjustable steel belt clip, which allows the unit to swivel on a single pivot point. The holster remains in place when the swivel is tightened. At a certain sweet spot, the swivel retains the holster in position but allows a range of adjustment when worn. This makes for considerable versatility.

As an example, we all come to realize that we need more than one holster. A single holster might do most of what we need done, but there are four seasons in most parts of this country and different working, driving and walking conditions. The Cover 6 IWB holster can be worn on the small of the back over the rear pocket in the standard carry position. It can be canted forward for the FBI tilt — an ideal draw angle, though a tall individual might want less cant. The holster can be moved forward and carried in the appendix position with nearly a neutral cant. Moving to the crossdraw position, the holster can be adjusted for a brilliantly fast draw from a seated or driving position. This type of versatility doesn't exist with gimmick or cheap holsters and is a desirable design feature in the holsters tested from Cover 6 Gear. The belt clips are sturdy, and

the adjustment is positive.

The two smaller IWB holsters were crafted for popular light handguns — the Glock 42 and the Smith & Wesson 442. Interestingly enough, I found that the Taurus AirLite .32 Magnum is a very snug fit in the Smith & Wesson holster, while the two snub-nosed revolvers appear very similar in size. Always order for the exact handgun. Conversely, the IWB holster ordered for the SIG P220 also fit the SIG P226 and P225, but that is no surprise; it is the frame that is the primary difference in these handguns.

My personal single-column magazine P220 9mm with European-heel-type magazine release was a good fit in the IWB holster. I also used the short slide SIG P6. The P6 9mm is an extremely fast handgun from the holster, and it deserves good leather. The SIG is a little long for appendix carry for the average person, but just the same, it proved viable overall in the behind-the-back, appendix and crossdraw positions with the IWB holster. These units offer good concealment, excellent versatility and good comfort. At about \$60 each, they are a good buy.

I also tested the Cover 6 Gear Kydex holster. This is a well-designed and rigid out-

side-the-waistband (OWB) holster with all of the advantages of thermoplastic resin. In common with the Glock and SIG IWB holsters, this design features a sweat guard. The sweat guard or body shield is an important part of the holster design. This shield protects the wearer from the handgun and the handgun from corrosive body salts.

Testing the SIG P6 from this holster proved an eye opener. The balance of speed and retention is good, and there is a substantial level of retention, but I have never used a faster holster. This is a true high-ride design with well-designed belt loops. Molded from .080-inch thick Kydex, this holster is well built. I understand why European police favored the SIG P6/P225 coupled with a good holster: This compact 9mm is very fast. The Cover 6 Gear Kydex holster is a viable choice when covering garments might be worn.

This company offers good quality at a fair price. I think we will be hearing more good things from them.



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» **REALTOR DANA LAZICH LAID AWAKE ALL NIGHT** worried that she'd picked the wrong career. She tossed and turned, mentally replaying the latest news report of another realtor brutally murdered during a home showing. Dana had two choices to resolve this concern: She could quit her job and begin to research a new occupation, or she could take the time to learn about concealed carry and self-defense.

PEACE OF MIND

EXPLORING HER RIGHT TO CARRY

■ BY KRISTEN MONROE

» Selecting the correct sidearm is one of the most personal decisions a woman or man can make. Here, USCCA instructor Heather Borland, right, helps Dana Lazich, middle, assess various pistols and revolvers at The Range of Richfield in Richfield, Wisconsin.





» When an individual is new to shooting, quality of instruction is extremely important. A highly skilled instructor can bring a total novice up to a very impressive level of performance in a relatively short period of time, but lesser-trained instructors run the risk of frustrating students and turning them off for good.

The decision to carry would not only allow her to feel comfortable with the job she loved but also provide her with the means to protect her entire family. After all, her family is more important than her career. I was not surprised when she called to tell me she wanted to work toward obtaining a concealed carry permit.

I have known Dana since middle school. We have been great friends for more than 20 years, and she has never been one to be taken advantage of. Dana has always given off a certain vibe of confidence, which I suspect has helped her avoid becoming a victim. She typically rules the show with an alpha-female attitude and firm-but-kind demeanor. As such, it made perfect sense when she decided to learn about guns and protection.

Normally fearless, Dana had contemplated buying a gun on several occasions, but every time she walked into a gun shop, she'd turn around and walk back out. Picking out a gun alone and inexperienced can be scary without knowing the right questions to ask and where to start, and some gun shop employees certainly don't go out of their way to help in the matter.

Dana's latest visit to the gun shop was

different; I took her to The Range of Richfield in Richfield, Wisconsin. Not only do they have a wide selection of guns, but they also have a state-of-the-art range that allows customers to shoot before they buy. Above all, they have the friendly, knowledgeable staff that can be so important to getting a new shooter off on the right foot.

SELECTING A GUN

After making the decision to protect herself, picking out the right gun was Dana's next step; after all, it doesn't make a lot of sense to just run out and buy any old gun and then take a class. The simple fact that a gun is on sale doesn't automatically make it the right choice. In fact, you should make every effort to test-fire any gun before buying it.

Range officer Jason Babiasz greeted us with a warm smile and a welcoming attitude, which helped put Dana at ease and made the job of picking out a gun fun rather than intimidating. He introduced her to 10 different options, ranging in chamberings from .380 ACP to .45 ACP.

Dana carefully picked up and felt the

weight of each gun.

After getting to know each grip size, shape, angle and material, Babiasz put away the guns that she'd decided were obviously too big for concealed carry, leaving her six guns to test-fire. All would make great concealed carry guns, but only one of them would perform the best for Dana that day during live-fire tests.

USCCA Instructor Heather Borland joined us at the range complex to offer Dana basic pistol shooting fundamentals.

"It's similar to trying on shoes," Borland said. "It might look like the perfect shoe, but until you try it on and walk in it, you really don't know how it will feel."

We explored grip extensions and accessories. Borland changed the grip on her own personal gun with a slip-on rubber sleeve, which made it easier for Dana to hold versus the smaller, harder plastic factory configuration.

"You can make alterations to specific guns to make them work even better for you," Borland explained. "Different grips, grip sleeves, magazine extensions, you name it."

There are pros and cons to every CCW



gun, and there is more to learn about besides the physical matching of gun to hand. Some might sacrifice the power of a larger cartridge in order to carry a gun that is smaller and more comfortable. Others might prefer the swing-out simplicity of a revolver over the magazine-fed semi-automatic.

Talking about how pistols function and the technical features of each gun made Dana even more comfortable, and simply knowing how these things worked seemed to lift a huge weight off her shoulders. I could tell from the way she was handling the guns that her confidence was increasing by the minute.

Earlier that day as we drove to the range, Dana told me she really wanted a smaller gun so it would be easier to carry and hide. I warned her about smaller guns often being harder to shoot, especially for new or recoil-sensitive shooters; it wasn't the first time she had heard that, and she seemed a little disappointed to hear the news again.

I gave her a range safety pamphlet to look over one more time before our arrival.

"Here," I said. "The real test will be trying them. If you always follow these rules, accidents won't happen."

BASIC INSTRUCTION

Education helps to alleviate fear, and Borland's easygoing and knowledge base made it easier for Dana to learn. Sure, I know a few things from the classes I have taken and I've read a few books, but I'm no instructor. The dynamics of relationships can interfere with the learning process, which is another reason why it's usually a net positive to have an instructor or experienced range officer rather than a spouse or family member assist a new shooter. I once heard a lady at the range say to her husband, "You're telling me how to hold a gun, not teaching me."

Borland explained sight alignment to Dana using pictures from the *Concealed Carry and Home Defense Fundamentals* book. "Equal spacing on the left and right of the front sight" is easier to understand using a diagram, and Dana quickly understood how misaligning sight as little as $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch can translate into more than 12 inches of error at 50 feet.

It's important to let new shooters ask questions, and this environment definitely supported that dynamic. We talked freely in our small group, and Dana was able to ask questions at any time. With Borland and

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Babiasz working together, Dana had the attention she needed to learn quickly and efficiently. Though there were many more details that could have been discussed had we enjoyed the luxury of more time, Dana had the basics down and was ready to shoot.

THE RANGE

Babiasz went over the safety rules once more before we put on our personal protection equipment and headed to the 12-lane indoor range. As we entered, I noticed that it didn't smell like any indoor range I'd ever set

foot in; in fact, it didn't smell like anything at all.

"Our facility has a special air ventilation system with HEPA filtration," Babiasz said. "It provides air turnover every 60 seconds to eliminate airborne lead exposure."

"What luck to have a range of this caliber within a short drive from our homes in southeastern Wisconsin," I thought.

Dana had the perfect environment for her first shooting lesson.

Borland taught Dana the isosceles stance and gave her a brief lesson on trigger control: The finger must be pressed straight to

the rear, making sure the muzzle alignment is not shifted. She practiced dry firing first, then moved on to live rounds. Dana squeezed the trigger smoothly without jerking the gun; a look of satisfaction beamed from her face, and for good reason.

Shooting six different guns at 18 feet, it didn't take long before her groupings started to improve. I can only imagine what she will accomplish after taking additional classes and further developing her skills.

Each range lane was equipped with a touch-screen Mancom target retrieval sys-

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tem. This allowed Babiasz to remotely adjust targets to the desired distance from the firing line — in this case, 75 feet. He ran it back this far to demonstrate how difficult a tight grouping is to accomplish at such a distance. Dana managed to tag the target a few times but quickly realized the challenge presented by that kind of distance.

Babiasz then set the target on an automatic timer at a closer distance, which allowed the target to turn broadside to and then away from the shooter. This gave Dana an opportunity for a lesson on point-shooting, at which she excelled.

DEBRIEF

I'm not sure whose smile was bigger on the way home.

"That was amazing," Dana said.

It feels good to shoot, but it feels even better seeing the light turn on for others.

As it turns out, the smallest gun, a SIG P238 chambered in .380 ACP, performed the best for her, proving yet again that test-firing a gun before you decide to buy is very important. In the end, Dana prioritized comfort and control over brute force — a good move in her case, as the gun too uncomfortable to carry every day gets left at home. (She also hinted that a 9mm Beretta 92 might be the next gun on her shopping list as a home defense arm.)

Oh, and Dana's informed me that she hasn't had any trouble sleeping since our day together at The Range of Richfield.



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JUST ASK

A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

SAFETY'S ALWAYS IN SEASON

BY *GEORGE HARRIS*



»QUESTION: In the life that I live, I might find myself in a business suit one day, shorts and a T-shirt on another and everything in between in a month's time. This makes concealed carry a difficult task for me in an ever-changing environment, not to mention the challenges of clothing selection and actual carry location for the pistol of the day. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I often carry more out of convenience than I do out of practical and tactical application, and on rare occasions, I opt not to carry under extenuating circumstances. My preferred carry handgun is a Springfield XD with 200-grain +P ammunition carried in an inside-the-waistband holster. In reality, I find myself carrying a Ruger LCP in a pocket holster or a belly band more often than not. Especially when traveling or participating in a recreational activity, I opt for convenience and ease of carry over firepower and horsepower. Am I wrong in carrying more for convenience and perhaps necessity due to the circumstances rather than carrying what I would rather have if I found myself in a gunfight?



» **ANSWER:** Convenience can be a dirty word, especially when it comes to concealed carry. Flexibility to the situation is something we don't like to talk about either.

Many of us preach perfect-world situations in an effort to drive home the seriousness of why we are carrying concealed. However, the reality for many is that concealed carry ends up being a compromise. I would suggest to you that should the actual truth be known, more people carry what is convenient for them to carry rather than something that has more weight and a larger bore diameter.

» Though lacking the sight radius, grip size and ammunition capacity of full-size double-stack pistols, smaller single-stack autos, like this Ruger LC9, can be much easier to conceal in hot weather than their larger cousins.

Clothing for a great majority of concealed carriers is a huge variable as it is for you. Those of us who live in the northeastern part of the country might see 100 degrees in the summertime and conversely might see the high of the day in the single digits or below six months later. When you look at some of the basic tenets of concealed carry — location consistency, obscurity, access, retention and recovery — the type of clothing that you wear dictates flexibility. While some might disagree, in my opinion, the best that you have to work with are options on the dominant side at waist level whether it be belt-mounted, in a pocket or under a shirt in a belly band. There is a degree of consistency here in motor movement that aids access, retention and recovery to the holster even though each carry method is slightly different from the other.

Convenience in concealed carry is often related to the size and weight of the gun and ammunition as well as the ease with which we can put them on and take them off.

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In a recent conversation, long-time firearms industry professional, equipment designer, trainer and friend Tom Marx made this very astute statement: "If a person can't put the gun on as easily as their watch or the wallet they carry every day, regardless of how they dress or what they're going to do, sooner or later, they are going to tire of the effort, and then the gun they so purposely acquired and so studiously learned to employ will simply get left behind, perhaps on the day when it is needed the most." I fully concur with Tom's comment.

Humans are creatures of comfort. Often we can rationalize our daily lives into the comfort column over the being-prepared-for-any-eventuality column. We have thought processes that include: "What's the worst that could happen?" or "What is the likelihood that I'll need a certain type of armament just to run a quick errand?" Only you can answer those questions for yourself. But I would encourage anyone to err on the side of caution and go with the premise of, "It's better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it."

The first rule of a gunfight is to have a gun. Close behind that is to know how



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to use it. Right on the heels of those two is to have practiced enough in its use and carry location to have the confidence in your ability to take care of business when the situation allows you no other alternative.

Practicing with the XD on the hip doesn't help a lot if the LCP is carried in the pocket on most of your excursions. Also, be aware of subtle handling differences between the two pistols. The triggers are at opposite ends of the spectrum for the two guns with one being a double-action-only and the other, for all intents and purposes, a single action. Should an emergency reload be necessary, the slide doesn't lock open after the last shot to signal that you are out of ammunition on the LCP as it does with the XD. Habits and skill are built on repetition. That's why it is important to practice the most with what you are likely to have with you when the condition of your environment deteriorates to the point that nothing else will suffice.

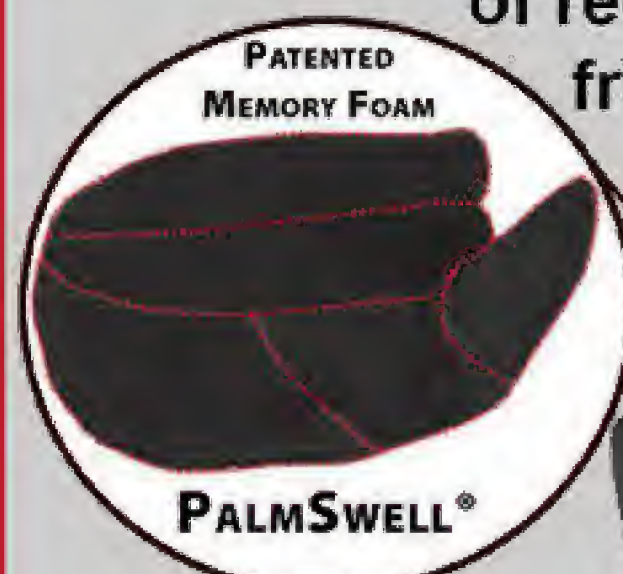
You have to be realistic about how you live your life, knowing that no matter where you are, there is always an element of safety and an element of risk. While carrying out of convenience might not be ideal for all eventualities, it is vastly better than not carrying at all.



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SHERIFF

**SOMEONE IS SHOOTING
BUT NOT AT YOU. WHAT
SHOULD YOU DO?**

■ BY C.R. WILLIAMS

A person in a military uniform is shown from the side, with their right arm extended towards the large white text. The background is dark and textured.

POLICE AMBUSH

» NOVEMBER 2009: Lakewood, Washington. A man walks into a coffee shop and kills four police officers.

June 2014: Las Vegas, Nevada. A man and a woman walk into a pizza place and kill two police officers.

The shooters didn't target anyone but police in either incident. Anyone else in those places would have been threatened more by stray rounds than by deliberate intent. So someone there who was legally armed at the time might have been able to act to stop the shooters.

Maybe.

That's the first question in this scenario: Is there time and space for you, the private citizen carrying a concealed firearm, to take action?

The simple answer is, "Yes." In the Lakewood incident, the shooter fought with two of the officers before he was able to kill them. In the Las Vegas ambush, the shooters paused long enough to collect weapons from the murdered men and drape a Gadsden flag over one of them. If you waited, you would have chances to make a shot.

Or you could have reacted after the guns came out and the first shots were fired. In both incidents, the shooters were focused on their targets and not just shooting anybody in sight. You would have an instant or so to draw, aim and fire.

That's assuming you weren't caught as off-guard as the officers were and that you have the variants of basic skills you would need. I'll look at the skill sets shortly. First, let's look at the situational awareness aspects of these police-ambush scenarios.

There are no indications from reports that the shooters came in with guns in hand or with expressions of insane rage or hypnotic,

robotic focus on their targets. They might have appeared to be more tense or nervous, but that kind of appearance could be explained as stress, irritation or even apprehension about something personal like we all feel from time to time. There are no indications that their dress made them stand out as threats either. If you had looked at them as they were coming through the door, would anything have made you especially interested or concerned?

Do you even look up when you're in a café or restaurant and someone comes in? If you do, what do you look at first? I got this list from my ongoing study (I regret to say I don't have the source of this recorded), and I believe it is a good guideline:

- Whole Person
- Hands
- Waist Line
- Immediate Area
- Demeanor

It should be possible to conduct such a scan quickly and without getting the shooter's attention by fixing your eyes on him or her. This and your gut might — *might* — give you some hint as to at least a potential for violence from that person.

Be attentive to your gut reaction, intuition, sixth sense or whatever you want to call it. If somebody looks or feels hinky to you, do your best to figure out why. You might be wrong, but it's not like you're going to draw your gun and start shooting before something else happens to confirm the suspicions, right? If you're right, though, that feeling could give you a few extra instants and make a difference in who and how many in that area get killed.

Situational awareness goes beyond "back to the wall where you can see the entrance" habits. Have you ever considered the layout of your favorite eating establishment the way a commander considers the terrain of a potential battlefield? You should. It doesn't have to be an involved analysis that takes all your attention; it can be conducted the same way you set up a "what if?" in your mind during idle moments. Like the "what if?" questions you construct, though, that mental terrain analysis could pay huge dividends if you have to act against someone coming on with malice aforethought while you're there one day.

Forewarning or not, this is one of the rare situations within the low probability of any one of us being in a gunfight where you will have, at least for a brief moment, a free shot. You are not being fired on, remember. The cop-killer is focused on killing cops, not on killing you. This gives you the opportunity to set up the shot — something you're unlikely to get in other situations. But there won't be much time to set up. You still need to be able to:

- Draw from a seated position, including when you're at a table or in a booth.
- Draw and present to directions other than directly to your front.
- Hold, aim and fire from a seated position.
- Hold, aim and fire to directions other than directly to your front.
- Quickly assume ad-hoc resting positions. (Gun resting on counter you crouch behind or table you kneel behind, for example.)
- Make use of the terrain to move to a better position to shoot from or to gain concealment or cover.
- Have the knowledge of anatomy enough to make a central nervous system (CNS) hit, specifically to the "light switch" (amygdala) from any direction.

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- Have the capability to make that light-switch hit.

When practicing for this situation specifically, work first on consistent small groups from sitting and to different directions within a three-second time frame from concealment. Refine that to light-switch accuracy and then see if you can get the time down to below two seconds.

Understand also that you might not be dealing with a stationary target, or at best, you will be dealing with a target that is only stationary for less than a full second. The other factor to consider is that the shooter might end up grappling with one or more officers as happened in the Lakewood incident. So consider that you might have to call your shot off on the instant, but realize also that you will be unable to keep from shooting if you have committed and are pulling the trigger. Your reaction time simply will not allow you to stop the pull after that.

You will want to work these kinds of things through in your mental simulations, not just for this situation but to help prepare you for any shooting situation where others are in close proximity to the attackers. No, you cannot work out every detail of every possible shot decision ahead of time. You can at least start to give yourself some limits, guidelines and permissions that will help you if you ever face the event, however.

One thing to bear in mind, especially in this kind of situation, is the reaction of the surviving police in the area. You can't depend on them to instantly know that you're a good guy and on their side even if you just shot someone that was trying to kill them. This is one of those low-probability circumstances where following the at-

tacker down or holding on them or even keeping the gun out, much less doing the normal after-shot sweep for more bad guys, could get you in trouble. It might be tough to override your previous training to do otherwise, but in this situation, consider dropping your gun and even getting away from it as soon as you're sure the shot is good. I'm not sure if I like this idea, but I like the idea of getting shot by the people I just helped out a lot less.

Also, don't expect the shooting investigators to give you a break just because you helped fellow officers stay alive. Follow the normal rules of dealing with police and investigators after a personal shooting incident. I use Massad Ayoob's four or five statements as a guideline and strongly suggest you have a similar outline committed to memory. You can't expect to be calm and composed and thinking clearly, so make sure you have some trained responses for this, just like you do for the person that pulls the gun on you or somebody else.

The police ambush is, in some respects, like any other threat to another, but there are enough things different about it that it demands a different approach than a normal defensive shooting incident. But like every other shooting situation, preparation and planning ahead of the need is the smart thing to do and could be the thing that one day saves a life that would otherwise be lost.

That's a possibility that makes it worth the time to think it through a little, don't you think?



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» THERE IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION

among certain carriers of concealed firearms that they will rise to the occasion. They will swoop in and take out all of the bad guys single-handedly. They will be superheroes.

The gun becomes their special cape, allowing them to do everything correct when bullets start coming their way.

In reality, any given individual will only rise to the lowest level of training she has mastered. Those who are seasoned hunters or have shot competitively might be skilled with a weapon but still might not necessarily possess the mindset or tactics to use that weapon to save lives. The skill sets are very different.

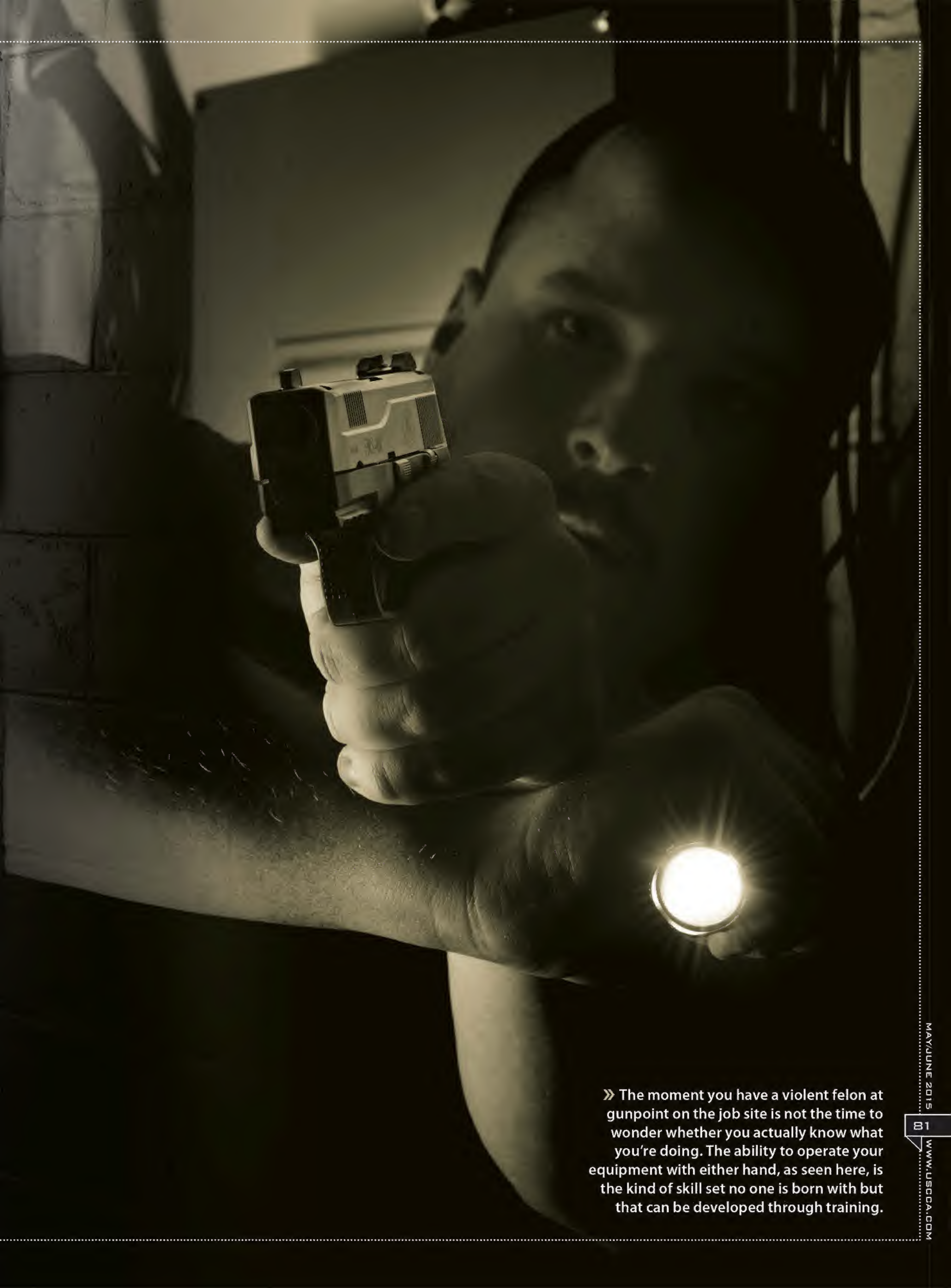
If you carry daily, you should be training regularly in three specific areas, and this is especially true for those who are new to the idea of concealed carry and the use of weapons. Defensive pistol classes designed to teach you how to survive a gunfight will hone your basic defensive skills. Medical training that teaches you how to administer life-saving aid until EMS arrives will allow you to render help to those who are injured. Force-on-force training — the kind that presents scenarios to test your gun skills under stress — will put your judgment and ability to remain calm and rational under stress to the test. All of the above will teach you how to deal with the battles you will face after the gunfight has ended.



TRAINING ESSENTIALS

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

■ BY MARY WEDDINGTON



» The moment you have a violent felon at gunpoint on the job site is not the time to wonder whether you actually know what you're doing. The ability to operate your equipment with either hand, as seen here, is the kind of skill set no one is born with but that can be developed through training.

Defensive pistol training isn't just about standing stagnant in front of a paper target and creating a nicely formed grouping. It isn't about the perfect stance or proper foot placement. A good defensive class should instill the fundamentals of shooting while teaching you the skills and tactics you need to survive a violent confrontation. Focus should be on properly drawing your weapon from concealment and getting your sights on target; it should be on learning how to shoot and reload while moving, shoot to and from cover, shoot from defensive positions and solve critical weapon malfunctions and failures under stress.

Every time you pull the trigger, you alone are responsible for that round. Accuracy is important, and accuracy while on the move is even more important. Tactics and mindset, along with skill, will help you survive, and the only way to bring all of those things together is through training.

Medical training should be another priority, even if you do not carry a gun. Bad things happen to good people — car ac-

cidents are a daily occurrence. Having the ability to assess and aid a person on-scene before EMS arrives can be the difference between saving a life or watching someone die. Medical classes focus on treating life-threatening injuries, such as arterial bleeds, blocked airways and tension pneumothorax (pressure built up by air in the chest cavity). These injuries require immediate medical intervention.

Arterial bleeds can only be stopped by applying direct pressure on the artery. Knowing where and how to apply a tourniquet followed up with a pressure dressing to the wound can slow blood loss long enough for medical assistance to arrive.

Lack of oxygen from a blocked airway or facial injury is completely treatable with a nasopharyngeal airway, which is basically a tube inserted through the nose and into the throat. This is the easiest way to create a clear airway.

Tension pneumothorax is pressure that builds inside the chest as a result of a hole in the chest cavity. If the air pressure continues to build, it will restrict the ability of the victim to breathe. Inserting a decom-

pression needle between the second and third intercostal space in the upper chest cavity can release the air and provide comfort until medical help can arrive.

All of the above examples are terrifying to imagine but can be treated with proper training and the right equipment. You need both.

If you are involved in a gunfight, you could be shot, and being able to treat your own wounds is critical to survival. Medical personnel will eventually arrive on scene after a gunfight. They will not, however, be allowed to go into a situation where violence has occurred unless the scene has been secured by law enforcement, and it can take up to an hour for a scene to be cleared. You cannot rely on someone else to save you if you are wounded. Learning to treat traumatic injuries is a skill every adult should possess, and if you carry a gun, these are skills you absolutely must have.

Next on the list in preparation for surviving a gunfight is some type of force-on-force training. Force-on-force classes are designed to present scenarios in which you might be forced to fight for your life. Many training schools use the Glock 17 TFX Training pistols, marking firearms or Airsoft pistols. The training ammo used with the Glock training pistol are Force on Force brand or Simunitions paint-marking rounds. These are marking rounds that work effortlessly with the training pistol and provide a more-than-adequate pain penalty.

The pistol itself functions just like a real Glock. The only difference is when you get shot (and if you take a class, you will be shot), you have a nice bruise rather than a bullet wound. A pellet from an airsoft pistol will also let you know when you've been hit, but its impact won't be quite as painful as that from a paint-marking round. Either way, it's better to be shot by one of those while learning than hit by a bullet in a violent confrontation.

Force-on-force training should include training in normal situations as well as low-light to blackout conditions. Bad guys don't always strike during daylight hours. In fact, darkness is their friend, and quite often, they use it to conceal their intentions. There is also the issue of creating your own light source and understanding how important it is to include a flashlight in your everyday carry (EDC).

**TRAINING ISN'T SOMETHING
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Force-on-force training will allow you to face your own mortality in a safer fashion. The actual gunfight will only last seconds, but there will be an immediate emotional battle that occurs after a gunfight. It will force you to deal with the effects of adrenaline dumps during a gunfight and afterward, affects that can sometimes take up to 48 hours to completely subside. That time is critical because not only are you dealing with the effects of the fight itself, you will most likely be forced to talk to law enforcement in that time period as well. What you say and how you react will affect any legal battle you might face in the future. You will make mistakes. You will find that you will not do everything right. As the scenarios intensify, so do your reactions. Consider the pistol and medical training as daily lessons and the force-on-force class as the final exam.

John Farnam, a former police officer, veteran and one of the top firearms instructors in the nation, has said many times that it's not the "great shot" that wins the fight; it is all the little mistakes you don't make. Amateurs practice to

get it right. Professionals train until they can't get it wrong. The worst time to realize you've made a mistake is during a gunfight; training allows you to make mistakes in a controlled setting so that corrections can be made safely and under

the supervision of a qualified instructor. You owe it to yourself and those you love to seek training and be prepared.



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THE FIVE-SHOT
SNUB-NOSED
DEFENSIVE
REVOLVER
BY SCOTT W. WAGNER





» THERE ARE MORE OUTSTANDING CONCEALED CARRY HANDGUNS on the market today than at any time in history. This means that the hardest part of carrying a concealed defensive handgun is deciding on the one that will work best for you. Gun store shelves are full of used handguns that ended up as trade-ins for other types or styles that the owners felt worked better for them.

» There is one very basic, very solid fact that explains why more than six decades after their introduction, modern .38 Special snubbies still fly off the shelves: They're simple, they're effective and they work.



While I've carried many different types of off-duty guns through the years and test different handguns on an almost weekly basis for articles, my gun of choice for the majority of my off-duty time is a snub-nosed revolver — specifically the Smith & Wesson Model 642 Airweight .38 Special Revolver.

Why? The snub-nosed revolver has a lot to offer, and its positive attributes can often be overlooked these days when semi-automatics are so popular. Let's take a look at what a snub-nosed revolver has to offer:

- Nearly any quality revolver is as reliable as any machine made by man can be. I have never had one fail when fed proper ammo in the correct caliber.

- On all but very few exceptions, there is no manually operated safety to overcome before the trigger can be pulled. It is always ready to go as long as there is ammo available in the cylinder.

- I have never had *any* revolver accidentally lose access to its ammo source. The cylinder latch release is nearly impossible to activate inadvertently. I can't say the same for semi-automatics.

- Snub-nosed revolvers are available in some very solid, proven defensive calibers such as the .38 Special, .44 Special and .357 Magnum, all of which provide significant power in a small package.

- Any revolver, snub or otherwise, will be inherently more accurate than nearly any semi-automatic pistol of comparable size due to the fact that a revolver barrel is fixed to the frame, while the barrels of most semi-autos move as part of the firing sequence.

- A concealed hammer revolver, like my Smith & Wesson 642, is the only repeating firearm that one can fire from inside a coat pocket without it snagging or jamming.

- The variety of bullet styles for any revolver caliber is almost limitless in comparison to a semi-auto. From wadcutters to semi-wadcutters, hollow-points, round nose or shot cartridges, they all work.

Since there is no perfect machine, there are some potentially negative snubnose traits:

- Ammunition capacity is lacking. Most centerfire snubs are five-shooters. However, even in the law enforcement world, the average number of rounds exchanged is low. In New York City, the average number of rounds fired per officer was only 5.2 per incident as of the year 2000, so a five-shot capacity might not be as huge a disadvan-

tage as it appears at first glance.

- Revolvers are slower to reload unless you practice extensively using proper technique.

- The short sight radius might make precision sighting difficult.

- The 12-pound double-action trigger pull might be too much for people with hand strength issues. However, if the snub has an exposed hammer, rapid single-action fire (which lowers trigger pull weight down to about 4 pounds) can be achieved.

THE GUNS

I contacted Charter Arms and Sturm, Ruger for some extra examples of American-made snubbies to supplement my 642 to give you an idea of the different types of five-shot snubs that are available. There truly is something here for everyone.

CHARTER ARMS

Charter Arms manufactures an extensive line of defensive revolvers — 57 variants are cataloged. Their revolvers are innovative, sturdy and reliable. I requested a sample of what I consider their penultimate model, the Standard Blue .44 Special Bulldog.

If you select a five-round firearm, it might as well chamber big rounds. Introduced in 1907 by Smith & Wesson, the .44 Special launched a 246-grain lead round nose bullet at 755 feet per second. (The vaunted .45 ACP's original military load delivered a 230-grain bullet at 830 feet per second.) Considering the .44 Special used a soft lead bullet rather than a fully-jacketed one, I give the edge to the .44 Special in terms of stopping power.

The .44 Bulldog weighs in at 21 ounces in the Blue Standard version and has a 2.5-inch barrel. Construction is stainless-steel-finished in matte blue. The sights are fixed, the rear sight is a groove in the topstrap and the hammer is exposed. Charter equips their revolvers with recoil-absorbing rubber grips. I carried an original Bulldog .44 in the 1980s as an off-duty gun. Back then, Charter's triggers left a lot to be desired, and my Bulldog's trigger pull was heavy with hitches in it. It took a lot of concentration to shoot it with precision, but I loved the caliber and figured the big hole in the end of the barrel would have a strong deterrent effect when viewed from the unfriendly end.

I am happy to report that the trigger pull on the current .44 Bulldog has been greatly improved. The pull weight is still around 12

pounds, but is smooth throughout.

I took the Bulldog to the range with two different loads along with Tuff Products QuickStrips for speed-reloading of the five-shot cylinder. QuickStrips compactly hold five rounds in a row and allow for loading one or two rounds at a time.

The two .44 Special loads tested were the aluminum-cased Blazer 200-grain Gold Dot hollow-points — rated at 920 feet per second and 376 foot-pounds of energy from a 5.15-inch barrel. For a more sedate yet still effective self-defense load, I also tested the 240-grain lead flat-point Winchester Cowboy Load. It is rated at 750

feet per second and 300 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle.

The Charter Bulldog performed flawlessly with both loads, loading and ejecting smoothly. Both rounds were more than accurate enough for any reasonable purpose. Recoil with Blazer ammo was significant but not punishing. The Cowboy loads were pleasant to shoot, and easier to control in rapid fire. Big, slow-moving soft lead loads have been effective threat stoppers ever since the days of the Old West and will work just as well today. They are also a very good choice if you live in a locale where hollow-point bullets are banned.



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I carried the Bulldog in a Remora inside-the-waistband/pocket holster and in a fanny pack as my off-duty carry piece while on vacation in the woods of northern Michigan. The Remora is a unique design with a tacky outer skin that stays in place inside the waistband without clips, hooks or loops. It can also be shoved in a pants or coat pocket without any modification or adjustment. The .44 Special Bulldog served

comfortably as a defensive gun on the trail and for carry in town. It is an excellent defensive choice.

RUGER

From Ruger, I requested two samples that are basically at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of snubnose design and concept — a stainless .357 Magnum SP101 with a 2-inch barrel and an LCR chambered for .38 Special +P, a modern melding of polymer and metal for lighter weight and lower cost.

The five-shot SP101 was introduced in

1989 in .38 Special caliber. The SP101 can be field stripped down into the upper frame and barrel, cylinder and yoke, and lower frame action assembly for easy cleaning.

The SP101 was one of the first small-frame revolvers to chamber .357 Magnum ammo. The 2.25-inch barreled version I tested has fixed sights. The front sight is blued steel and stands out in the rear sight groove in the topstrap. Unloaded weight is a solid 26 ounces.

I tested the SP101 over a chronograph with two .357 Magnum loads from Ted Nugent ammunition and a Speer Gold Dot .38 Special load. The .357 loads were the 125-grain Defender and the 158-grain hunting load. Both rounds used Speer Gold Dot hollow-points.

Testing revealed two pleasant surprises. First, the loads maintained a high velocity from the short barrel. Average velocity for the 125-grain Defender load was 1,263 feet per second, while the velocity for the 158-grain load was 1,220 feet per second. Both of these rounds readily exceeded the velocity of the 125-grain +P Speer Gold Dot .38 Special loads by a wide margin — average velocity for the .38 was 919 fps, respectable but not up to the .357 Magnum levels. Kinetic energy at the muzzle for all three rounds worked out to be 443, 522 and 234 foot-pounds of energy, respectively. In short, the .357 Magnum has a definite ballistic advantage over the .38 Special when fired from short-barreled revolvers.

The second surprise was that shooting the SP101 didn't hurt and is nothing to fear because of the 26-ounce weight and the cushioned rubber grips. While significant, the SP101's recoil was controllable, making it capable at any reasonable combat distance. Loaded with .357 Magnum rounds, it would also make a great trail companion.

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The LCR represents a 25-year technological leap ahead of the SP101. The sample I received has an exposed hammer spur, which allows this version to be fired single action. The standard LCR configuration is hammerless.

Important features of the LCR are the polymer fire control housing, monolithic aluminum upper frame, blackened stainless steel cylinder and interchangeable front sights. The disassembly sequence for the LCR is a bit more complex than the procedure for the SP101, but it is workable. Weight for the .38 +P version is 13.5 ounces.

The front sight features a white strip insert for excellent contrast with the rear groove. Firing the same .38 Special +P Gold Dot loads that I used in the SP101 proved the LCR is a competent defensive revolver. Recoil was more than the SP101 loaded with the same rounds but still controllable. The trigger of the LCR is nothing short of superb. The length of travel is shorter than most snubs and is as smooth as glass, while still weighing in at around 12 pounds.

MSRP of the SP101 is \$659. MSRP of the LCR is \$529.

SMITH & WESSON

The S&W 642 in .38 Special is a classic Airweight revolver. The term "Airweight" means that the frame is aluminum, as opposed to steel, stainless steel, Scandium or polymer. It affords good balance of light weight and durability. At 15 ounces, the 642 can handle any .38 Special round on the market — standard, +P or +P+ loads are fine, but I would take it easy on the +P+ stuff.

What makes the 642 unique in the test group is that it follows the old "Centennial" Smith & Wesson pattern of enclosing the hammer in the frame. This makes the Centennial about as ideal a deep concealed carry firearm as anything on the market. The 642 and others like it are the only handguns that can be fired until empty from within a coat pocket.

The 642 has been a constant companion of mine while off-duty for at least 10 years. It features a standard-weight barrel and comes with rubber grips, and I have run a wide variety of .38 Special loads through it over the years. Most often, the preferred load was the Winchester 158-grain lead semi-wad-cutter hollow-point +P load. Today I prefer the 200-grain "Super Police" rounds that I had custom loaded due to their light recoil and tendency to yaw in target. I switched my grips out for a set from Crimson Trace

because there is one thing lacking with the sights: the front is matte stainless while the rear groove is natural aluminum. They don't pick up as nicely as the LCR.

Recoil for the 642 is about the same as the Ruger LCR. It is a time-proven revolver with an MSRP of only \$469.

STILL STRONG

The snub-nosed revolver is the oldest surviving concealed carry handgun ever designed. It is also one of the very best types, and the type I have carried as an off-duty handgun the most in my career. Other de-

signs come and go, but I know the snub revolver in some form will be riding with me for a long time to come.



ON THE WEB

Charter Arms: charterfirearms.com

Ruger Firearms: ruger.com

Smith & Wesson: smith-wesson.com

Remora Holsters: remoraholsterstore.com

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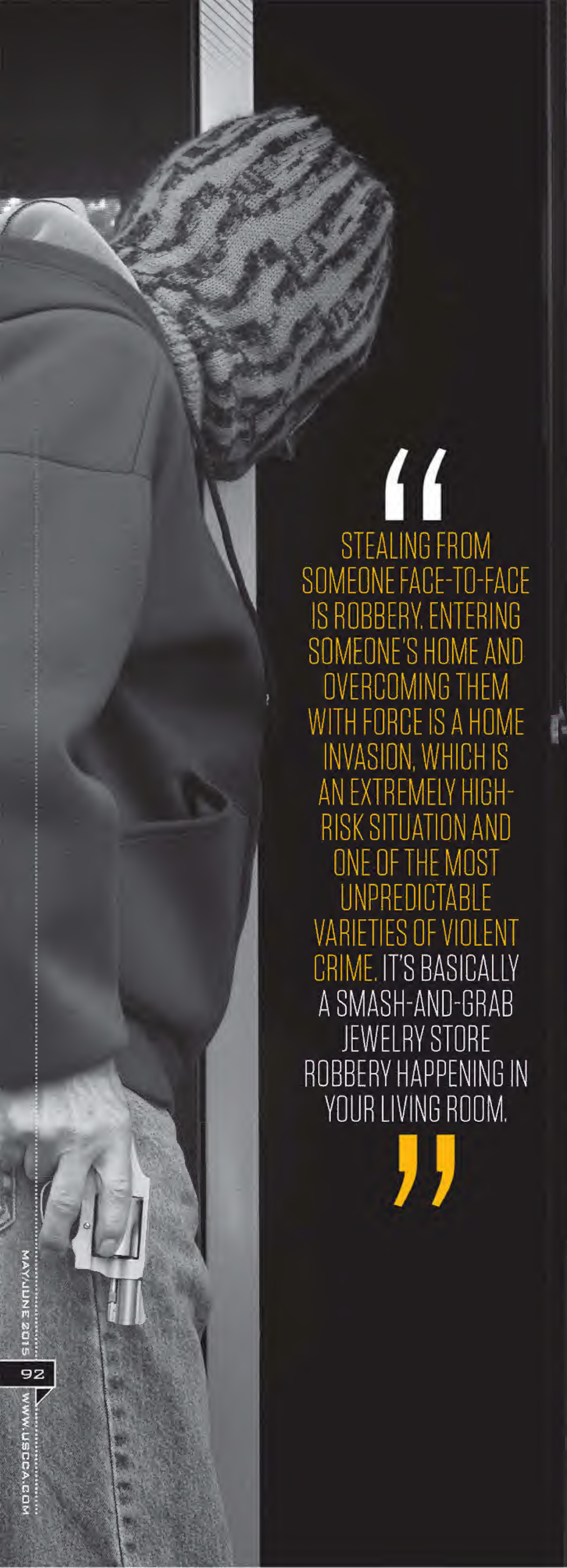
GATEKEEPERS BEWARE ■ BY ED COMBS



» **THERE ARE CERTAIN TERMS** used when discussing self-defense that anti-gunners usually get confused. This not only complicates communication, it can actually be dangerous. These confusions lead to some anti-gun individuals calling any killing a “murder” and also to the fundamental misinforming of the general public when it comes to the definition of the words burglary, robbery and home invasion. The next time someone is giving you static about how they’re against defensive arm ownership because “burglars are more afraid of you than you are of them,” ask them what, exactly, their definition of “burglar” is. You might have to inform them that like “murder,” “burglary” is a legal term with a specific definition.

A burglary occurs when an individual enters an unoccupied building without the permission of the owner and removes items for fun or profit. That’s a burglary —stealing from someone’s home or business when they’re not there — and the person who commits such an act is a burglar.

For the most part, burglars fall into two categories: professionals and amateurs. A professional burglar will spend anywhere from days to months casing a residential or commercial property, and his goal is to be certain that no one is in the building when he enters. Heist movies aren’t reality. He and nine of his fellow master criminals will not infiltrate a casino in Monte Carlo with the help of a brassy redhead and a Shaolin monk; he and possibly one or two accomplices will figure out when the man with no security system on his home will be off on a long weekend, pull up in a moving truck and get to work emptying the house of literally everything, possibly even the light and plumbing fixtures.



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STEALING FROM
SOMEONE FACE-TO-FACE
IS ROBBERY. ENTERING
SOMEONE'S HOME AND
OVERCOMING THEM
WITH FORCE IS A HOME
INVASION, WHICH IS
AN EXTREMELY HIGH-
RISK SITUATION AND
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VARIETIES OF VIOLENT
CRIME. IT'S BASICALLY
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”

Amateur burglars make their way onto the news more frequently than professionals simply through their incompetence. They are usually your basic “Look out, meth, here I come!” spinouts who do things like knock themselves unconscious when they’re hit by the brick they just bounced off the glass door of a shuttered bank at 2 in the morning. They do no homework other than to make a mental list of buildings they think might have money or valuables inside them, and they will often flee if confronted.

Often, but not always. Sometimes when they find a residence to be occupied, they simply murder everyone inside, because daddy ain’t going back to prison.

Stealing from someone face-to-face is robbery. Entering someone’s home and overcoming them with force is a home invasion, which is an extremely high-risk situation and one of the most unpredictable varieties of violent crime. It’s basically a smash-and-grab jewelry store robbery happening in your living room, and if you are unfortunate enough to become the target of one, you will have very little time to react. You’ll need to do something, though. Robbers who enter a residence that they know to be occupied are exponentially more likely to use force against the people inside than a burglar who thinks you’re at work or on vacation; part of the planning of a home invasion is how the individuals in the home will be overpowered, restrained and possibly killed. As I try to never be any more graphic than absolutely necessary, I will simply say almost unthinkable horrible things happen during home invasions and leave it at that.

The good news is that doors usually aren’t simply kicked in without warning. As often as not, home invasions begin with the resident opening the door to their attackers, which means that such nightmares can be prevented.

These are the most common ruses employed by violent criminals in the commission of home invasions. The bad news is that Americans are, for the most part, extremely hospitable folks who will usually drop everything to help a stranger, and predators will exploit this to their advantage. The good news is that a little forethought can thwart predators’ attempts at terrorizing you and your loved ones.

THE EMERGENCY

This one plays out as follows: There is a pounding on your door, usually at night. If you simply open the door without a word, in they’ll come. If you ask who’s there, you will hear a frantic voice tell you that there has been an accident and that they need to come in to call for an ambulance.

If this happens, immediately move away from the door as you tell your visitor to stay where they are and that you’re calling 911 for them. Here’s the most important part: *Immediately do so*, dictating to the dispatcher exactly what is going on. Give them your address and tell them that there’s a person or people at your door telling you that there’s been a terrible accident and that you need law enforcement and EMS right away. Tell the dispatcher that you do not feel comfortable opening the door, and whatever the dispatcher says, keep telling them you don’t feel comfortable doing anything other than waiting for emergency services.

Now back to the alleged accident victim. You’ll learn an awful lot about what’s actually going on by the way the folks on the other side of the door react. If their reaction is to shout something like “Thank you, Jesus! God Bless You!”, then they are, in all likelihood, telling the truth. Though your instinct might be to allow them into your house, step back and remind yourself that there isn’t really anything you

would be able to do for them inside anyway. If you feel bound and determined to head out and help, understand that you might well be involving yourself in a very serious, very dangerous situation.

If their reaction to you announcing that you've dialed 911 for them is vociferous objection, you are in the middle of an attempted home invasion. If you haven't already done so, you need to get hands on a weapon, assume a position of tactical advantage, take a deep breath and remember to not be holding the gun when the police arrive.

THE MAINTENANCE MAN

This ploy is extremely common in hotels and large apartment complexes. Someone will knock on the door, and if you simply open it, in they'll come. If you ask who is at the door before opening it, they will tell you they are from some manner of utility or management company and they need to come in. Fortunately, criminals who employ this tactic rarely wear costumes or otherwise try to actually look like whom they're impersonating; they're just counting on your instinct to open a door whenever anyone asks you to.

If your landlord or management company has not contacted you beforehand, move away from the door and tell Mr. Fix-It that you will have to call and confirm that someone is indeed supposed to be making a house call. Remember to move away from the door and immediately call whoever allegedly sent them, though this is where it gets tricky. If at all possible, have a weapon in hand as you call the management, as your potential invader might use the time you're on the phone to breach the doorway. If the answer from the other end of the line is no, treat the situation the way you would in our first case: Dial 911, apprise the dispatcher of what is happening and prepare to defend yourself.

IT'S THE COPS, OPEN UP!

This one gets all over the board; predators might simply say "POLICE" over and over again. They might claim to be from the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Queen's Constabulary or all kinds of organizations. The problem is most Americans have been conditioned to be good little neighbors and open the door whenever anyone knocks; as I've stated, a ruse is rarely necessary, as millions of us will simply open the door whenever anyone asks us to. You don't want to be the person who just opens the door.

Search warrants are occasionally sworn out to the incorrect address. Search warrant raids are occasionally executed on the incorrect address even though the correct address was on the warrant itself. If possible, try to get a look at who is at the door; if they're legit police, it will likely be very apparent. Either way, get away from the door and dial 911, and here's where it gets scary.

This situation can be extremely difficult because the people knocking on the door might, in fact, be the police. If they really are police officers serving a "knock-and-announce" warrant, call out to them and tell them you are calling 911 to make sure the people outside are really police. This might encourage them to wait, or it might encourage them to kick in the door thinking you are destroying evidence or readying an assault. Politeness often helps but not always. You can ask them to slide the warrant under the door, but they might or might not do so. If the police have a "no knock" warrant, they are coming in! Look for badges and listen for shouts of "Police! Show me your hands! Get on the ground!" Bad guys, unless they are educated and disciplined, will usually yell something else.

If the people at the door are actually law enforcement, you're not going to want to be holding a firearm when they kick it in. However, if they are not actually law enforcement, rarely will they kick a door down. They wanted you to open the door, and if you refuse to do so, they will likely leave as they'll assume you're on to their trick or the kind of person who's getting ready to shoot them. I am not advocating violence against law enforcement in any way; I am simply giving you an insight into the mind of a home invader.

SAVE MY BABY

Though there have been innumerable chain emails warning people against opening the door for the sound of a screaming baby and such emails are usually false, that doesn't mean that no one has ever instigated a home invasion by claiming that they had a sick baby and needed to get indoors. Like with The Emergency, remind yourself that there really isn't anything you could do for them inside of your house. If the person at your door insists that she really is a woman in crisis holding an infant, tell her that you will call 911 for them and that EMS will come by to take her somewhere safe. Her reaction will tell you everything you need to know.

In short, ask yourself what seems more likely: that this really is a woman who is at the point of walking up to a stranger's home in the middle of the night or that this is a person trying to get one over on you? Like the email in your junk folder from a Nigerian Prince, go with your gut when the story seems unreasonable. Either way, get away from the door, dial 911 and prepare yourself for what might be coming.

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SPECIAL DELIVERY

UPS and FedEx understand branding: Not only do they show up in a great big truck with their name on the side in great big letters, their delivery driver will arrive at your door in a sporty uniform, package in hand, ready for you to sign for whatever it is you or-

dered or were lucky enough to receive as an unexpected gift.

If you look closely, that man or woman will be wearing a hat, shirt and pants branded with the corporate logo. He or she might well even be wearing UPS or FedEx socks and probably has a company-branded pen in his

or her pocket. In short, neither of these companies do anything on the down-low.

So when an individual shows up at your door saying they have a package for you and they're wearing jeans and a leather jacket, the chances of the call being legit are basically zero. This is admittedly the easiest of the home invasion ploys to recognize: You didn't order anything, and since this individual at your door is neither uniformed nor holding one of those electronic signature pads, you need to tell them to get away from your door and dial 911. If he, by some odd chance, IS a legit deliveryman who just happens to be wearing a hockey jersey and baggy khakis, then it's on him if the package doesn't get delivered. If he's running deliveries in street clothes, any responsible parcel delivery company will reprimand or fire him. *This is not your problem.*

If the man at your door is an actual deliveryman, he'll understand that you as a private citizen who was not expecting him and who didn't order anything categorically will not open the door. He'll plead that he could lose his job if he doesn't get this package delivered; ignore these pleas. Tell him that you're calling 911 and then do so. Tell the dispatcher that there is an individual trying to gain entry to your residence by posing as a deliveryman, and then prepare yourself for a potential invasion until the police arrive. (The crook will likely not hang around for the cops; make sure to tell the police exactly what happened and any details you can remember about the individual trying to get into your home. Even though you didn't let him in, you need to do everything you can to try to put him away. This was likely neither his first nor last day on the job.)

So those are the most common schemes. How do you defend against them and ensure that you never absentmindedly open your door to an attacker?

ALWAYS ASK

Just as simply locking the door will prevent a vast majority of thefts, asking who is at the door before you open it is the most fundamental and important step you can take to prevent a home invasion.

CALL FOR REFERENCES

When a water, power or sewer company intends to send service professionals to a location for maintenance or repair, they will almost always contact the resident beforehand, often to the tune of hours or even days. If there is a service emergency, they will usually call the phone number linked to the account to inform the customer that service

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in their home is necessary and therefore they should expect a representative at their door soon. They do this not only for the convenience of their workers but for the safety of their customers.

If someone is unexpectedly demanding entry to your residence, claiming that your landlord, the management company or some public utility has sent them, you absolutely positively have to confirm their identity before unlocking the door. Rather than asking to see a badge or other identification, tell them that you will have to contact the company that they're claiming to represent for confirmation of the service call.

BACK OFF

Whenever you have an unexpected caller who is making strange demands, one of the most important things you need to do is physically get away from the door. Give yourself distance; in self-defense, distance usually equals safety.

Were I attempting to force entry into an occupied room, my first step would be to knock or ring the bell and speak very softly. This causes 99 percent of humans to say, "What?" and move closer to the door itself, allowing me to kick the door in and not only breach the entryway but also knock the occupant off-balance and possibly unconscious. Picture how you would approach a door trying as hard as you can to hear the person on the other side: You would be slightly bent forward at the waist, you would have your ear turned to the door and you would possibly even have your ear to the door material. This is not the place or position to occupy when someone is about to plant a foot right above the doorknob.

USE YOUR HEAD

I am absolutely not advising that you always train the muzzle of a shotgun at your door whenever the bell rings. We're not looking for full-bore paranoia; we're looking to keep our families safe through forethought and common sense. If you expect the management company to send someone over tomorrow afternoon or you ordered a new set of bath towels from Amazon, you should treat that knock on the door just before dinner differently than an unexpected one at 9 in the evening.

The door only works if you lock it. The gun only works if you load it. Neither is of use if you voluntarily compromise them.



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» **THE DIFFERENCES IN CONCEALED CARRY** for men and women are profound, and there are considerations far beyond the simple differences in body types. Women tend to have higher hips and a shorter torso, but clothing styles also differ: A woman might wear a business suit during the day, a dress on Sunday and jogging pants around the park. While men also juggle a balance of safety and security with clothing choices, an inside-the-waistband (IWB) or belt holster will answer almost every problem. The holster often boils down to a fashion decision.

CARRYING IN A PURSE OR FANNY PACK

Some of the choices often recommended for ladies, such as holster purses, are slow on the draw. Off-body carry isn't the best choice, but sometimes it is the only choice available, and if you adopt a purse for carry, there are many varieties. While the gun-specific purse is one option, the standard purse already in the closet can also be a good choice when given specific treatment.

Most importantly, the pistol must be isolated from keys and other items. Among the tricks savvy women use to accomplish this is a magnetized purse broach, which incorporates a magnet to keep the keys in one place for security and convenience. Another good choice is a purse holster. These do not have to be as rugged or heavy duty as a holster worn on the person. They only have to clip into the purse and keep the pistol stabilized and safely isolated as you carry throughout the day. Often the draw from a purse requires two hands: one to rip the gun purse open and the other to draw. With the gun sleeve or holster clipped inside the purse, the draw will become smoother with practice.

» Since the widespread popularization of concealed carry, dozens of companies have understood that women are as concerned as their male counterparts with defending themselves and their families. For both on- and off-body carry, there are styles and features to suit every taste.



WOMEN'S HOLSTERS

FASHIONABLE AND FUNCTIONAL

BY BOB CAMPBELL





STRONG SIDE BELT HOLSTERS

There should be a good reason for leaving the strong side holster and moving to another type. The strong side holsters from Pinkpistolholsters.com offer good retention and a good draw angle. These are serious concealed carry holsters that ride high enough on the belt to be concealed under an un-tucked shirt (given a short handgun) and sit at the perfect angle for a rapid presentation from concealed carry. Retention is good and brilliantly fast with a 2-inch .38. The owner of the company extensively wears and tests holster designs before offering them for sale.

Fanny packs are a cross between on- and off-body carry, as the pistol is isolated from the body but is not quite as isolated (and potentially easily grabbed) as were it in a purse.

Regardless of style of nontraditional carry, the following conditions must always be met: The hand must blade into the purse or pack easily, grasp the handgun firmly and allow you to draw the handgun quickly, as only then are you able to move into the firing stance and onto the target.

Be certain to practice the draw with the carry rig you choose. Properly grasping the handgun on the draw is essential. Get a good firing grip on the handgun, and if needed, give it a sharp yank to clear the holster system. During a lethal force encounter, you will not have time to fumble around and adjust your grip as you draw.

IWB HOLSTERS

The IWB holster has many advantages. Since the holstered firearm rides inside the pants rather than out in plain view, a shorter covering garment can be worn as the holster does not protrude past the waistband. This is less important with a short handgun like a snub-nosed .38, as a good high-ride holster hardly extends past the waistband. If you wish to carry a larger handgun, such as a Glock 19 or SIG P250, then the 4-inch barrel becomes a consideration. The IWB buries the majority of the slide inside the pants. A drawback for some is comfort, and carrying the holster inside the pants demands acclimation.

That said, the good news is that an IWB holster might also be worn with a skirt if the fit is tight enough, the pistol light enough and if a proper belt is worn. One of the realities that makes this a popular op-

tion for some ladies is that as women have a higher waist, some have a more difficult time reaching to the small of their back to draw and as such, many women find the appendix position comfortable. With a properly designed holster, crossdraw and appendix are options with an IWB holster system.

Though more than a few women seem to regard IWB as a "No Girls Allowed" club, this simply isn't true. A compact handgun, such as the SIG P290 or the 3-inch-barreled revolver, is ideal for IWB, but larger types might be concealed as well. After all, larger handguns result in less felt recoil and therefore offer better hit probability, and the IWB holster is a good option for concealing serious fighting pistols.

THE BELLYBAND

Another option that is well-suited to female shooters is the bellyband. The natural swell of the hips makes for greater security and less chance of slippage with female shooters, but be forewarned: There are poorly made bellybands on the market hiding among the good ones. A belly band that retains its shape and keeps the pistol secure offers the option of positioning the handgun around the belt line in practically any position, angle or cant. The advice to purchase your slacks or jeans a size larger in anticipation of concealing a handgun is well taken but not always necessary. It depends upon the clothing and how wide the handgun actually is. A Ruger LC9 isn't very thick, and even a 3-inch-barreled 1911 is only an inch thick.

Bodies differ and no one holster is perfect for everyone; this is why there are so many styles and models available. Tolerance to weight and discomfort also vary

widely and are not always tied to body size. Sometimes even a tall or heavy person cannot tolerate weight hanging from their belt, but it is a mental leap that must be made in order to deploy lifesaving gear.

OTHER OPTIONS

When you move away from belt carry, things get complicated. Ankle carry works just fine with smaller handguns up to the snub .38 category, and the under-the-skirt thigh holster is particularly advantageous for women and among the most concealable of ladies' holsters.

The problem with ankle carry is that draw speed is compromised, becoming so slow that officers in a major agency once dubbed it "the dead man's draw." The rub remains, however, that the ankle feels like the ideal position for carrying a backup gun. The ankle holster can actually provide a fast draw if you are knocked on your back and able to raise the leg to the hand or if you are seated (as while driving), and it's these reasons it remains so popular among law enforcement officers.

It is more difficult to find fault with the thigh holster for under-the-skirt carry. Many options are comfortable, effective in concealment and offer a reasonably rapid presentation with practice. The pistol can be drawn from a standing position, which is not true with the ankle draw.

Pocket carry is particularly attractive as the handgun can be carried without a dedicated gun belt, but only a relatively light handgun can be carried in this type of setup. The SIG P290 and various snub-nosed .38s are at the outer edge of usefulness in this area. Above all, a handgun should never be simply thrust into the pocket but should be carried in a properly designed holster.

Such a holster should have a toe that catches the pocket, ensuring that it will stay put as the handgun is drawn.

When drawing, the hand must be bladed into the pocket and the handgun carefully drawn with the backstrap basically pinched in the web of the thumb and forefinger, which violates the rule of getting a proper grip before you draw the pistol. However, if you attempt to draw the pistol using a conventional grip, you will basically be making a fist, thus making it very difficult to get your hand out of the pocket and the gun into action.

Within the confines of this report, we have given you a comprehensive but still incomplete view of women's holsters. As is often repeated in training classes, without regular practice, you will not react quickly enough on the street, and drawing and firing a sidearm quickly and accurately is a perishable skill. The draw must be practiced constantly to be smooth, safe and efficient. It is difficult to draw the handgun from some of the concealed carry modes mentioned above without sweeping your own body with the muzzle, which means

we must engage in meaningful practice on a regular basis and constantly be aware of muzzle discipline and trigger discipline.

When it comes to handgun selection, we could start the engine of pointless argument, but the user must decide what type of handgun they can reasonably afford, master and use effectively. I personally cannot imagine trusting my life to any sidearm chambered in a cartridge less powerful than .38 Special or 9mm Luger. There are differing opinions, but these do not often include opinions of men and women with extensive law enforcement or combat experience.

A certain minimum caliber is required, and that means an efficient load-bearing device will be needed to carry it comfortably as a concealed firearm. A woman can face and defeat a larger, stronger attacker with the proper mindset and the proper gear, and women's holsters are part of that important equation.




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THE PLAIN OLD WALL DRILL

DRY-FIRE PRACTICE

■ BY CHIP EBERHART



» As much as we all love to train, the simple fact is that range time can be costly and inconvenient. Dry-fire drills that can be run in the home are the cheapest, easiest, simplest and most convenient manner in which to hone and master your skills.

» **MOST OF YOU** have heard of “Dry-Fire Practice” and thought it was boring or that it didn’t have any benefit in real-world shooting. Hopefully this drill will change your mind.

Shooting is a perishable skill. If you don’t continuously practice, your skills will continuously diminish. As a concealed carry permit holder, USCCA Certified Instructor and International Practical Shooting Confederation and United States Practical Shooting Association competitor, I’m a strong believer in dry-fire practice. It’s inexpensive, doesn’t require any travel and

is something you can do regularly to improve your shooting skills. All you need is a plain old wall — preferably a light-colored wall — and a little time. This drill will take 20 to 40 minutes to complete. If you can’t invest a half hour in something that can save your life, can you invest 24 hours a day in being dead?

The two-fold goal of the P.O.W. drill is to improve your muscle memory so that point of aim becomes natural; to be able to point-shoot based on improved muscle memory and point of aim. The drill is first executed in super-slow speed so that you can begin building good muscle memory. When we do everything fast, we only see the beginning and the end of an action. Executing actions purposefully in super-slow motion allows us to see the beginning, end and all the intricate movements that are critical in getting to the expected end condition: a proper sight picture. For this drill, as well as defensive shooting, the firearm is aimed at the upper thoracic section of the body.

Competitors might know this as the “A” zone. As you can see from the diagram, it makes sense.

To reiterate, doing things slow at first helps us to fine-tune our motions and allows us to see the little things that need to be corrected.

You should have a hard sight focus on the front sight with the rear sights and the target (in this case, your wall) appearing blurred. I call this the Fine Sight Focus method. Later, you’ll learn about the Floating

Sight Focus and the Flash Sight Focus. By now, you’re wondering, “How can I aim for the upper thoracic if I can’t see it?” We’ll get to using targets later, but for now, just try to push out at a natural elevation, as if the target/threat is the same height as you are.

As for equipment, your every day carry gun is all you need, but you can add to the experience by using a laser aid, such as the Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger (SIRT) training pistol from Next Level Training or Laser Ammo inserts from Laser-Ammo USA. If you really want to have some fun with the drill and get more feedback, add the Laser-Ammo Personal Electronic Trainer (PET) or the Light Activated Shot Reporter (L.A.S.R.) system from Centrolutions. Both work well with the Laser Ammo or SIRT pistols.

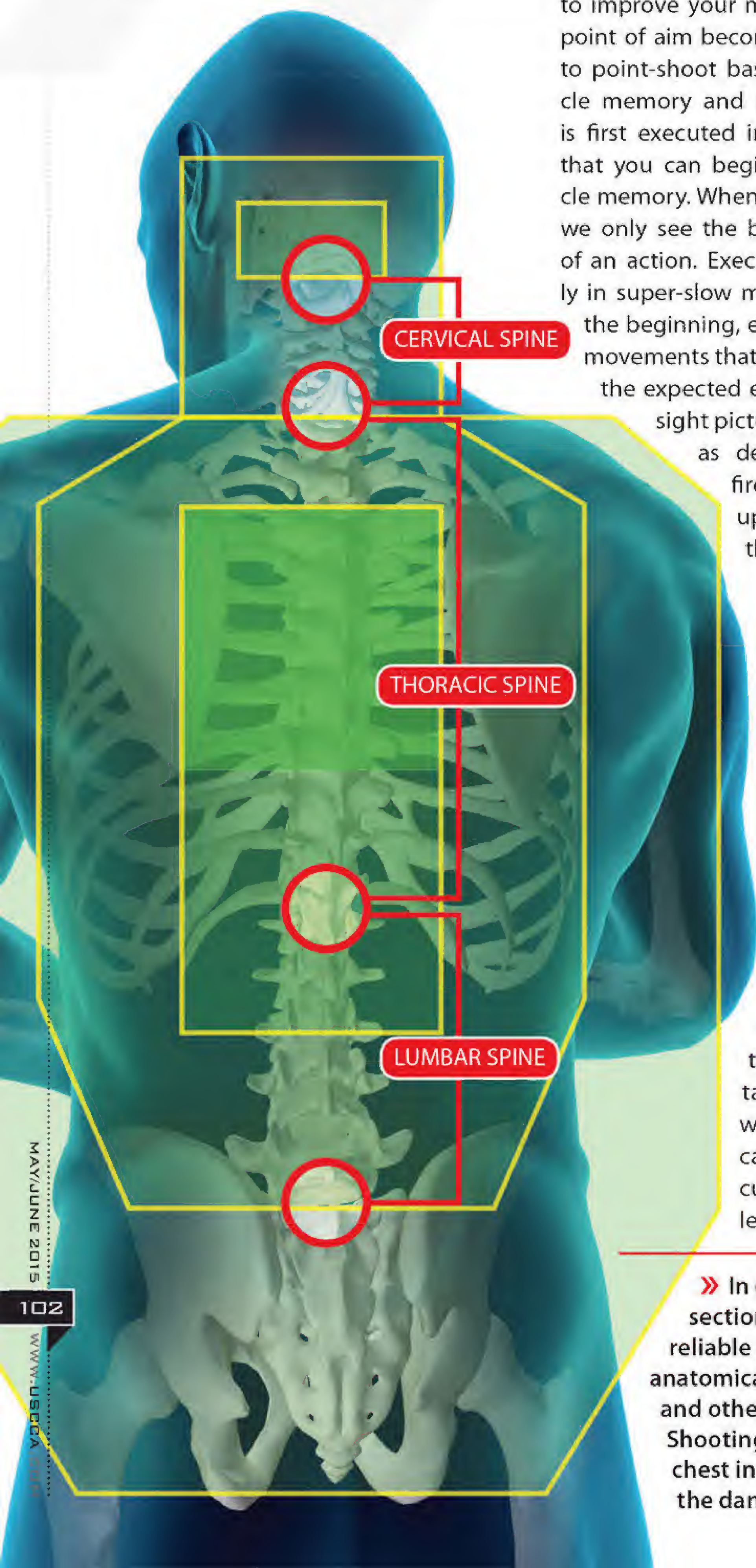
SAFETY FIRST

Whenever practicing dry fire, ensure that there is no live ammunition in the room with you. Ensure that the firearm and magazines are unloaded. Confirm that any magazines in the room are unloaded (even ones you don’t intend to use). Confirm that every firearm in the room is unloaded (even the ones you don’t intend to use). Continue to practice the four rules of firearms safety: Treat every firearm as if it’s loaded. Keep your finger off the trigger until your eyes are on the sights and you’ve made the conscious decision to fire. Don’t point a firearm at anything you’re not willing to destroy. Be aware of your target, target environment and what’s beyond it.

All of those rules are important, but the first and the last are the most important to me for dry fire. Just because I’ve confirmed that the firearm is unloaded doesn’t mean that I’ll treat it any differently than I would a loaded firearm. As for knowing your target and what’s beyond it, I’m not going to dry fire into a room where kids are playing or my wife is cooking or in an apartment where the neighbors are behind the wall.

Seriously, we hope nothing bad ever happens, but we still keep a fire extinguisher in the house and carry a firearm when we go outside. Oh, it’s also a pretty

» In defensive shooting, shots are directed to the upper thoracic section of the body simply because this is one of the fastest and most reliable ways to stop the threat presented by an attacker. If you look at an anatomical model of the human torso, it quickly becomes clear why IDPA and other competitive shooting targets are designed the way they are: Shooting for the upper chest and anywhere along the centerline of the chest increases the likelihood of a shot stopping an attack and limiting the danger to innocent life.



good idea to make sure your blinds and curtains are closed so you don't panic the neighbors.

THE DRILLS

1. Draw and index sights.

The goal of this drill is to draw the firearm and index the sights (have the sights aligned by the end of your full extension).

Do not look at the light switch on the wall, the nail hole on the wall, the crack, the dirt or anything on the wall. The only things you should see are your front and rear sights. For this first portion of the drill, the trigger finger should not move from the side of the frame (a.k.a. "locator button").

As you're drawing and pushing out, you should be looking forward at the wall (the threat), and your focus should shift to the front sight as you're able to see it. Do not look at the gun as you draw. Always bring the gun into your field of vision as opposed to taking your eyes off the target or threat.

Complete 10 reps at super-slow speed and 10 reps at normal speed.

2. Draw and prep trigger.

The goal of this drill is to draw the firearm, index the sights and prep the trigger without disturbing the sight picture.

The first part of trigger control is consciously getting your finger onto the trigger and prepping (taking up the slack or pre-travel of the trigger) without disturbing the sight picture. Locating and using trigger prep will optimize your shooting by reducing the amount of travel needed to break the shot and thereby reducing movement of the firearm. Again, don't look at anything except the front and rear sights (with a hard, sharp focus on the front sight).

Complete 10 reps at super-slow speed and 10 reps at normal speed.

If your firearm is capable of double action as well as single action, repeat for both conditions.

3. Draw, prep and break a single shot.

The goal of this drill is to draw the firearm, index the sights, prep the trigger and break a single shot without disturbing the sight picture.

The second part of trigger control is to smoothly pull the trigger to the break point without moving the gun left, right, up or down.

Now that you're more familiar with

prepping the trigger, you can begin your trigger prep as soon as you're able to see the sights in your peripheral vision. At the end of your extension, you should also have completed your trigger prep and can then smoothly break your shot.

Complete 10 reps at super-slow speed and 10 reps at normal speed.

If your firearm is capable of double action as well as single action, repeat for both conditions.

4. Draw, prep, break a single shot and reset the trigger.

The goal of this drill is to draw the firearm, index the sights, prep the trigger, break a shot and reset the trigger without disturbing the sight picture.

The third part of trigger control is to (after breaking a shot) train your finger to only allow the trigger to move forward enough to allow the trigger mechanism to reset to a condition where you can break the next shot. This is known as trigger reset: allowing the trigger to move back forward into the firing position, and not allowing it to travel any farther forward than absolutely necessary. Doing so is important to aid accuracy and increase efficiency.

Other than with double-action revolvers and traditional double-action capable pistols, you will not be able to feel the reset without working the slide (moving the slide to duplicate the reciprocating action that would have resulted from live fire). The exception to this is that some striker-fired pistols will allow for simulated reset if the slide is taken slightly out of battery by placing a piece of paper or other apparatus between the barrel and firearm breach.

This is an excellent reason to have a SIRT pistol for dry-fire practice. SIRT pistols are available in mocks of the Glock 17, as well as the Smith & Wesson M&P series of pistols.

Complete 10 reps at super-slow speed and 10 reps at normal speed.

If your firearm is capable of double action as well as single action, repeat for both conditions.

5. Draw, prep, break a single shot, reset the trigger and break a second shot.

The goal of this drill is the same as those that built up to it — to minimize disturbance of the sight picture. The extra goal here is to train your eyes to stay locked onto the front sight. Again, this is an excel-

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» Dry drills like this one are very practical for proper sight picture acquisition. As seen above, the front sight should be in clear focus and the rear sight should be slightly out of focus; there's no need to burn powder to practice doing so.

lent drill for the SIRT training pistols, because it will be difficult to execute without using a double-action firearm.

Complete 10 reps at super-slow speed and 10 reps at normal speed.

If your firearm is capable of double action as well as single action, repeat for both conditions.

6. Add a target paster (or similar sized piece of colored tape) and repeat the drills.

Traditional target pasters are approximately $\frac{7}{8}$ inches by $\frac{7}{8}$ inches of square brown adhesive.

The goal of this drill hasn't changed from the prior drills: smooth movement of the firearm with minimal disturbance of the sight picture.

Sure, we know it's the P.O.W. drill, but now you're going to add a target — a target paster. We could add an

entire target instead of a paster, but two of the biggest errors in handgun shooting are looking at the wrong place or looking

at too big of a place. The adage "aim small, miss small" comes into play here. By training yourself to target a smaller area, you'll find that your shot groups are smaller as well as more accurate.

Yes, start from Step 1 and go through to Step 5. Your hard focus should still be on the front sight with the paster being blurred behind it.

7. Stop using your sights — employ the "Flash Sight Method."

For most defensive shooting and closer target shooting, you won't have time to acquire a textbook sight picture. And for close distances (less than seven yards), you shouldn't need sights to instinctively point-shoot a target/threat.

The goal of this drill is to put your muscle memory to use. Now that you're better at reducing the disturbance of the sight picture, we can utilize those skills to train point-shooting (a.k.a. instinctive shooting). You might think that you can't point-shoot. With a closed fist held on your chest, try quickly pointing your finger at a few different objects in your room. Did

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Shot #	Shot Time (Sec)	SPR (FPS)	Target #	Shot Time
1	0.52	0.00	1	0.52
2	0.78	0.26	1	0.78
3	1.37	0.59	2	1.37
4	1.69	0.32	2	1.69
5	2.35	0.66	3	2.35
6	2.66	0.31	3	2.66
* Par Time Expired				4.00

04:00 SECONDS
MODE: Random Start with Par - PAR: 4.00

TRAIN SAFE

TRAIN SMART

TRAIN OFTEN

you miss anything you were pointing at? We've spent a lot of our lifetime perfecting our pointing skills, even if our moms told us it was impolite. We're really good at pointing, and now that we're better at trigger control, and better at looking at the right place, we can get better at point-shooting.

We call point-shooting the "Flash Sight Method" because you'll get a quick flash of the front sight.

Point-shooting is only for close-distance targets (less than seven yards) that are relatively simple. In target shooting, by relatively simple, we mean there's no "no shoot" targets or "hard cover" that an errant round could hit. In defensive shooting, by relatively simple, we mean there are no innocents that could be injured by an instinctively aimed shooting method. In situations where the difficulty is not great enough for a Fine Sight Focus but too difficult for a Flash Sight Focus, a Floating Sight Focus might be desirable. In Floating Sight Focus, the focal point of our eyes will float from target/threat to front sight and back to target/threat as

we break the shot.

8. Go to the range, load your firearm and try these drills in live fire.

Before you start, make sure you know the range rules and confirm that they allow holster use.

Running through drills 1 to 7 will take approximately 100 to 150 rounds of ammunition and about an hour on the range, and you may just find it to be the best hour you've ever spent on the firing line. If you take your time and follow the drills, you will see results and become a better shooter. If your range doesn't allow holster use, ask if you can start the drills from the high ready position.

After you've mastered this drill (or become bored with it), try stepping it up by placing a few pasters spaced apart on a wall or even on adjacent walls at 90 degrees if it's safe and possible (for dry-fire practice only).

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Shooting skills come natural to some, but need to be practiced by all. Only a handful are natural deadeyes, and most

of us require regular training to keep our skills sharp.

A police officer friend of mine thinks of defensive shooting like a football game: "The quarterback doesn't just practice before the big game. He practices as much as he can." When the result of firing a handgun can change the outcome of your life or your liberty, I consider doing so even more important than a big game. There's a lot on the line when it comes to defensive shooting, and I've never heard anyone who survived a violent encounter say, "I wish I hadn't practiced as much."

Dry fire is cheap, but you need to have goals in mind when doing any type of firearm training. The P.O.W. Drill isn't the only drill and might not be the best for you, but it's a great place to start. Practice might not make you perfect, but it will surely reduce your mistakes.



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WELL-ARMED MOM

WHAT TO WEAR
AT THE RANGE
BY BETH ALCAZAR

» IT'S REALLY NO SURPRISE THAT WOMEN AND MEN DRESS DIFFERENTLY — most of the time, anyway. Women are shaped differently. We like different things. And, frankly, we have a lot of different options (and opinions). Women, certainly, like to be comfortable too, but we really do love to wear that pop of color, some fun patterns, a variety of materials, those coordinating layers . . . and lots of accessories.



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Nevertheless, some of these fashion preferences can be distracting or even dangerous while shooting. So beyond the basic protective “eyes and ears,” here are just a few tips and considerations for women on what to wear — and what not to wear — at the range.

SHOES

For training, pumps are just not a good idea. I realize that there is always the possibility that a woman might be involved in a threatening situation while wearing those Jimmy Choo slingback wedges, but let’s just keep them in the closet when we go to the firing range. Keep peep toes, flip-flops and sandals at home too.

Take your training seriously, and you can avoid serious injury. No one wants to see someone twist an ankle because she’s tripped on some spent cartridges or panic because some hot brass has landed on top of her exposed foot.

CLOTHING

Speaking of spent cartridges, watch out for those. And wear something that won’t inadvertently act as a catching mitt for burning-hot metal debris. That baby-blue camisole and sheer, kimono-sleeved shrug are perfect for grabbing a business lunch, but they leave way too much skin exposed. And when the casing ejects from a semi-automatic, it might just land on you and sear that delicate, bare skin. It’s happened to me (and I’ve had the odd-shaped burn marks to prove it).

So cover and protect what skin you can with shooting-friendly attire, like high-neck t-shirts or long sleeves. Don’t wear anything too loose. Your clothes can easily get in the way of movement or, even worse, those aforementioned casings can get trapped in the folds.

HATS

I’m not a big fan of baseball caps. I think they look weird on me, and many gals just don’t want to fight with hat hair. But a cap can help with that ejected casing problem and add an extra level of protection for your face and eyes. (They’re also good for corralling loose hair.) So consider wearing a hat, or at least bring a headband or a hair tie to keep stray hair out of your face.

OUTERWEAR

Bring a jacket. Besides being good for

covering exposed skin and protecting your arms from hot fragments and debris, a jacket is good for some weather control. The outdoor range might be an invitation for sunburn or hypothermia, and I’ve never found an indoor range to offer the ideal temperature.

So pack a light jacket to wear to remedy those chills, use in case of sunburn (or brass burn) or remove when you feel like you’re baking and shooting at the same time. Just watch any pockets. Hot pieces of metal can easily turn into unwelcome hitchhikers.

ACCESSORIES

Watch the jewelry. Dangles and bangles can get in the way, whether they’re on your ears, around your neck or circling your wrist. Sentimental or expensive items have the possibility of being ruined or damaged by hot debris and toxic gasses emitted while shooting.

You might want to be comfortable and fashionable when you shoot, but you don’t need to worry about your infinity necklace breaking in half or your gold hoop earring flinging off down the lane.

MAKEUP

Yes, believe it or not, your makeup can make a difference at the shooting range, and it has nothing to do with impressing your date or looking amazing underneath the fluorescent lighting. If you’re outdoors, be sure to slather on the sunscreen first. But indoors or out, do not slather on the foundation. Too much makeup can actually trap fine lead particles and gasses against your skin, resulting in breakouts or irritation. And since you might get a bit sweaty, consider “makeup melt” and your desire not to experience that runny mess at the shooting range. In this case, less really is more.

DRESSED FOR THE RANGE

All in all, training should be a fun, safe and rewarding experience for everyone involved. So don’t let a gun fashion faux pas or other malfunction — wardrobe or firearm — keep you from enjoying your time on the range.





USCCA MEMBER
DONALD DENSON
ARMY VETERAN

TEXAS

» Austinite Donald Denson, a USCCA member for more than three years, makes no bones about his reasons for believing in concealed carry.

“Being retired from the Army and a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this issue is very close to my heart. Having the right to defend yourself or family cannot be legislated away by man, and we as a people should exercise the Constitutional rights we have in our pursuit of that defense. Even today, young men and women lay down their lives to give you the right to do so.

“Take your time to find the right firearm that you will be comfortable with. Once you have your firearm, get training and practice, practice, practice. You should be prepared and confident in your abilities, but pray you never have to use your weapon in an engagement. Last but not least, join an organization such as USCCA that will give you the resources to become an informed, trained and responsible concealed carry individual.”

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Make no mistake: These are extremely effective rounds . . . just make sure to mate them with the correct pistol (or, in this case, revolver). Learn more at winchester.com, and stay tuned for additional testing of this and other +P cartridges.



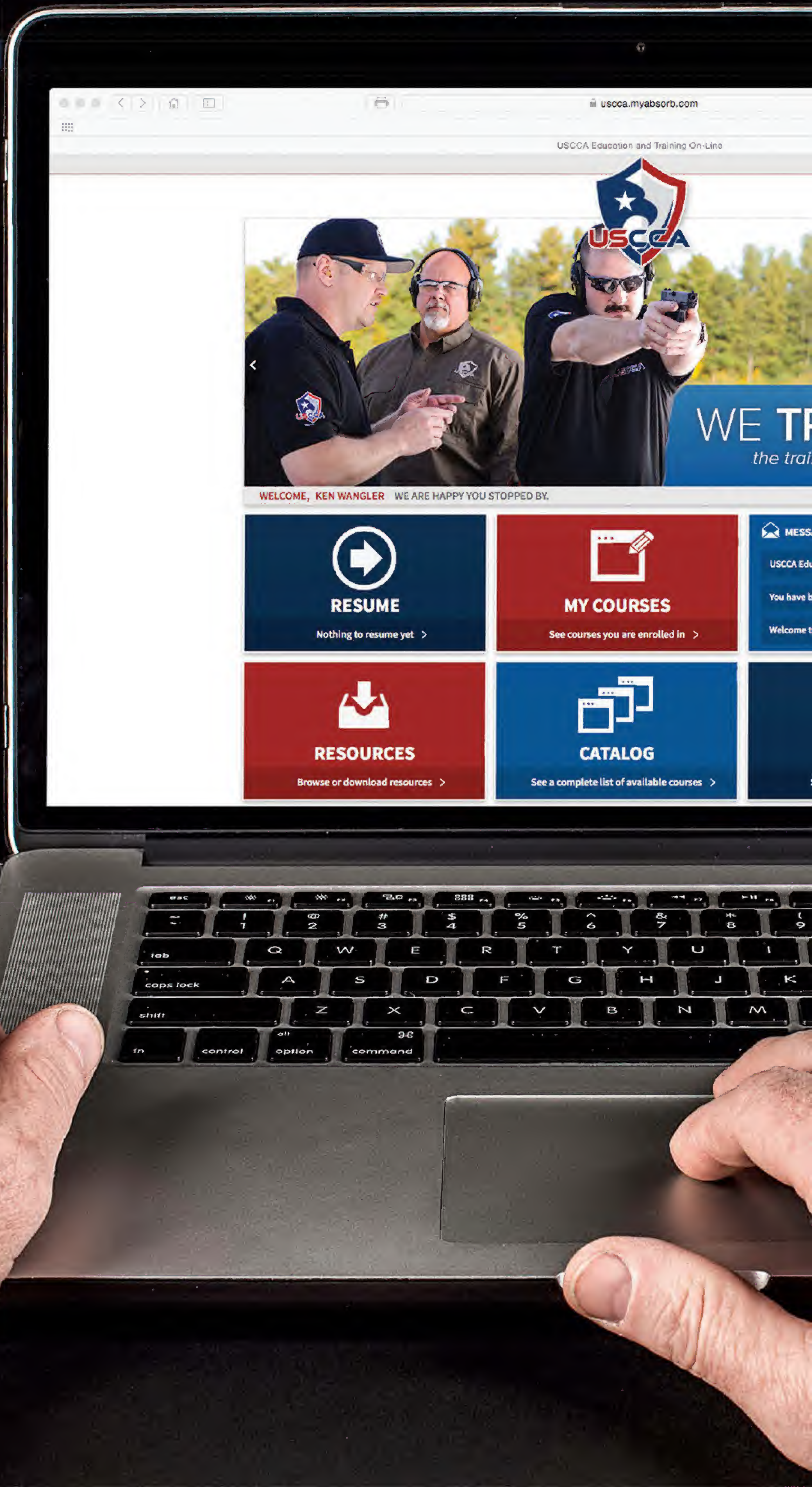
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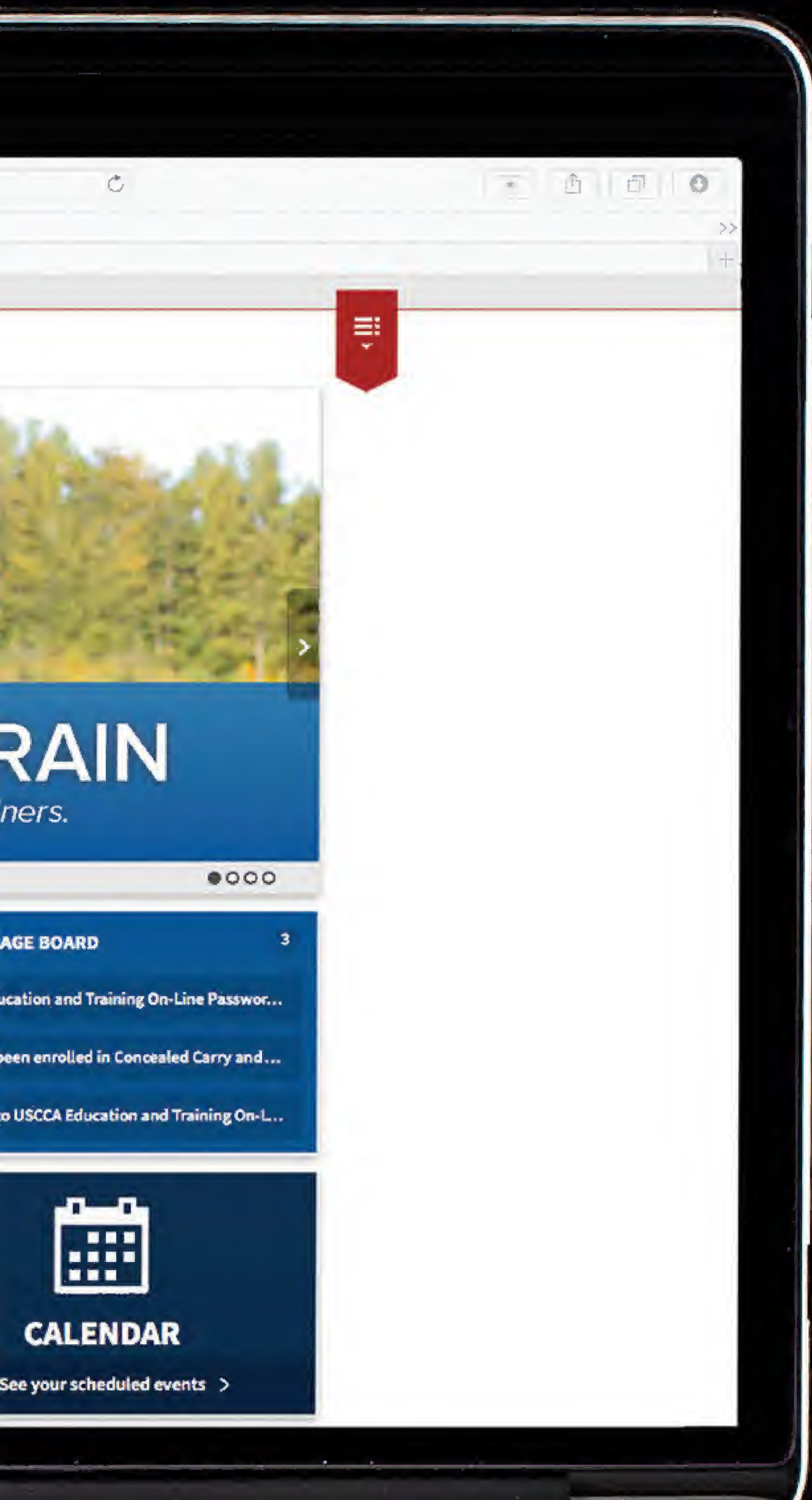
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» While the gel tests allow us to compare rounds side-by-side in a consistent medium, it should never be forgotten that the testing blocks are just that: testing blocks. They mimic human tissue very well, but they also lack bone, clothing and other components typically found inside or covering the human body. Were this projectile fired from this revolver to hit an attacker's sternum, rib, clavicle, skull or shoulder joint, the deformation of the hollow-point would likely have been far more dramatic. Unconventional expansion aside, this projectile — sent from this revolver — would deliver a payload of defensive force to be reckoned with. Better when sent from a barrel of over 3 inches? You bet, but the rather grim wad of lead and copper here is nothing to scoff at, either.

» In the old days, effective defensive firearm training was limited to military bases and police academies. Today, professional-grade instruction is available both in person from trainers and online, and the USCCA's new eLearning platform offers excellent stand-alone classes and, even better, serves as a foundation for continued education on defensive firearm use.





CONCEALED CARRY ONLINE

» IF YOU'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION to the emails from the USCCA over the past few months, you'll have noticed that we've recently launched our first online class, appropriately named Concealed Carry and Home Defense Fundamentals Online. While we're not the first company in the gun industry to bring our training online, we hope to be the best, and we believe that we've broken new ground in this relatively new medium.

At the time of this writing, we're still in the early stages of our release, but the feedback we've received from thousands of users has been overwhelmingly positive. But that begs the question, where exactly should online training fit into the concealed carry training world?

To begin that conversation, let's take a look at some of the limitations of the traditional classroom, which should help you to understand why the USCCA has taken this major leap into eLearning.



LIMITATIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

While I love to teach classes, I also love to take them, but too often, my response to a training opportunity is, "That weekend doesn't work for me," or, "My wife will kill me if I fly to Florida for another gun class." Beyond the obvious logistical limitations on the traditional classroom experience (instructors will understandably schedule a class based upon their schedule and a facility convenient to them, and not around my schedule and a facility convenient to me), there are other inherent limitations to this traditional method of knowledge transfer.

The most obvious limitation is that in the traditional classroom, all of the information is presented in one continuous stream. In the case of a concealed carry class, this is usually presented over the course of a single day or a couple days if you happen to live in Illinois. While that works great for meeting state-mandated requirements for what needs to be taught, it's not so great when it comes to knowledge retention. In order to retain knowledge in our long-term memory, repetition is key, yet repetition is sorely lacking in the traditional classroom as the instructor must continue to move from topic to topic in order to remain on schedule.

When I play the role of student, I've grown to accept the fact that regardless of the topic that's being presented, if it's new to me, I'll be lucky to retain 30 percent of that knowledge when I walk out the door (and yes, I'm being gracious to myself). If I want to retain more than that (or all of it), it's up to me to continue to study the topics repeatedly until that information is firmly entrenched in my cerebellum. As an instructor, I also accept the fact that if any of my students were to be quizzed a month after class without the benefit of notes or the help of our textbook on topics such as the four rules governing the use of deadly force, what must happen before the police are required to read the Miranda warning or the hundreds of other things discussed in class, I wouldn't be surprised to have my students get more than a few

answers wrong. I don't think that means I'm a lousy instructor. I think it reflects the fact that information isn't automatically recorded into our cerebellum as though our brain was the equivalent of a computer hard drive.

In addition, classroom training by design is not directed at the individual. Instead, it's directed at the group. But there is a psychology to group learning that is not always conducive to individual learning. Some of those shortcomings include:

- **One Gear Only** — Instructor-led training by its nature has just one speed, and that's the speed set by the instructor. If the class is slowed down to reach the most inexperienced student (or the student who simply requires a slower stream of information), then the other students are bored. If it's sped up to keep experienced students interested (or students who are comfortable drinking from a fire hose), then other students are left in the dust.

- **The Time Hog** — Every classroom has one: the guy who never stops stating his opinion in an attempt to show that he is smarter than the instructor or attempting to "stump the chump" by asking detailed questions that are usually off topic. Rarely does this dynamic improve individual learning; instead, it makes retention of important information even more difficult for the rest of the class.

- **The Fear of Embarrassment** — Too often, questions are not asked in class because an individual who doesn't understand a particular topic believes that they're the only one who doesn't get it. So they avoid the embarrassment of "not getting it" by doing nothing. Even worse, the fear of embarrassment can keep the student from attending class in the first place. Combined with logistical excuses (i.e. "That weekend doesn't work for me ..."), we're keeping millions of potential students from the concealed carry classroom.

- **Group-Based Testing** — The knowledge test in the classroom is also usually group-based, not individual-based. I've had an opportunity to sit through a couple dozen concealed carry classes and have attended dozens more classes for firefighting and EMS, and I always cringe when an instructor asks, "Does everyone know what a _____ is?" Nine times out of 10 (or 99 times out of 100?) everyone will remain silent, implying that they do know the answer. The problem is if a student doesn't know the answer, they'll rarely voice that in class for fear of embarrassing themselves, as explained in the previous issue. In a classroom setting, it isn't practical to continually test all students before advancing to the next topic, so instead, we use the ineffective substitute, "Does anyone have any questions?"



» Student interaction is an important part of the USCCA online training, including the use of interactive "widgets" that allow the student to explore a particular topic at his own pace.

“ IN ORDER TO RETAIN KNOWLEDGE IN OUR LONG-TERM MEMORY, REPETITION IS KEY, YET REPETITION IS SORELY LACKING IN THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM AS THE INSTRUCTOR MUST CONTINUE TO MOVE FROM TOPIC TO TOPIC IN ORDER TO REMAIN ON SCHEDULE. ”

THE PROS OF THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting that we do away with the classroom experience entirely. In fact, I believe that it provides a couple elements far better than online training. One such benefit is that classroom training provides a social experience that promotes the open sharing of opinions and the opportunity to debate important subjects.

In the classes that I teach, there are several points where the group dynamic is important, including a segment where I ask the students to pretend that they're the prosecutor on a hypothetical shooting as I slowly reveal bits of evidence uncovered by the police. That's a dynamic that I can't easily reproduce in an online course.

Instructor-led classes also combine first-hand instructor interaction with zero latency between the time a student asks a clarifying question and the time the question is answered (if the student doesn't fall

into the "fear of embarrassment" trap mentioned earlier). An ability to "chat" with an instructor online or email the instructor with questions comes close, but it loses the ability for the instructor to read any nuance in the student's voice, and it also loses the history that normally occurs between an instructor and student in a classroom setting (i.e. an instructor can remember, "I know that this student is afraid of guns, so I'm going to answer his question in a different way than I'd answer it for an experienced student ...").

Lastly, the other major benefit of classroom training is that it can include hands-on time, something critical to building "muscle memory" (actually, neural pathways) for repetitive movements such as clearing a firearm.

On that last note, when I discuss the idea of eLearning with other concealed carry instructors, one of the most common objections raised is the fact that online students obviously don't get any

instructor-led trigger time. While that's true, the vast majority of concealed carry classes that I've attended and have taught spend far more time educating students on topics such as conflict avoidance, the law and even the theory behind defensive shooting fundamentals (i.e. why there is a difference between marksmanship and defensive shooting techniques) before the students ever make the trip to the range.

I've often commented to my students that if they remember just one set of topics after leaving class, it should be the topics centered around developing a personal and home protection plan and the incredible seriousness of carrying a concealed firearm rather than remembering the five steps involved in drawing from the holster.

The fact is, if a concealed carry permit holder runs into trouble after they've completed their training, it usually isn't because they failed to effectively shoot

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other words, the problem could potentially have been avoided if the permit holder had spent more time on theory and the law rather than on time behind the trigger. Now that's not to say that I see no value in time on the range; it's just that I place a greater emphasis on the other important topics that need to be covered in a concealed carry class.

THE PROS OF ELEARNING

When it comes to knowledge retention, you might be surprised at how online students compare with students in a traditional classroom setting. A recent report of online education conducted for the Department of Education looked at 99 studies that compared online to classroom performance for the exact same courses. While some of the studies looked at elementary through high school settings, most of the studies focused on university and other adult continuing-education programs, including police, fire department, EMS and military training. The study found that on average, online students ranked

in the 59th percentile in tested performance compared with the 50th percentile for students who took the course in a traditional classroom setting.

Barbara Means, who was the study's lead author, commented, "The study's major significance lies in demonstrating that online learning today is not just better than nothing — it actually tends to be better than conventional instruction." My purpose in mentioning this study isn't to try to demonstrate that online training is dramatically better than classroom training. Instead, it's meant to demonstrate that the argument that classroom training is dramatically better than eLearning seems to be without merit.

So why exactly can eLearning lead to higher tested performance? The Department of Education report focused on a couple possible reasons. The most obvious reason was that eLearning courses allow the student to learn at their own pace and to digest the information being taught in bite-sized chunks. In other words, if a class is six hours long, breaking that topic into six one-hour blocks (or 12 30-minute blocks) can lead to greater knowledge retention than a single six-hour continuous class.

Unlike eLearning, there is also little or no ability to "rewind" a classroom instructor to get him to repeat exactly what he just said, and there are few or no requirements to correctly answer questions before advancing to the next segment.

As an example, just two days ago, I completed an online course for the fire department dealing with natural gas emergencies. It was a short course, but when I reached the end of the first section, I was presented with a 10-question quiz, which effectively told me, "You shall not pass" until I proved that I had retained the information. Even though I had just completed the first section, I couldn't remember how many feet away a fire apparatus should be parked from a high-pressure natural gas leak. (The answer is 330 feet if you're curious.) So I was forced to rewind that topic and watch it again. Sure enough, that time it sunk in and I passed the quiz. That ability to rewind and the constant testing of my understanding of the material led to a far greater retention of the information than if I'd simply heard it in a classroom one time before the instructor asked, "Are there any questions?" at the end of class.

» Online training opens up this important education to the millions of Americans who are unable to fit a concealed carry class into their hectic schedules or who haven't taken a class because of the fear of embarrassment that they imagine can occur in a traditional classroom.

an attacker in the cardiovascular triangle. Instead, it's usually because the permit holder made a bad choice on where they went, what they said or what they did. In

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MULTIMEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

It's been long known that the highest rate of knowledge retention occurs when a student not only sees a topic but when he also hears it and has an opportunity to learn the topic by doing. Looking at that sentence, you might imagine that the traditional classroom experience might have the edge compared to online training, but that's actually not the case.

Traditionally, if we think of a student "doing" something, we'd think of her standing in the classroom with a dummy or Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger (SIRT) pistol in her hand or standing at the range with a real gun. But any activity on the student's part can break her out of "autopilot" mode and can lead to a better understanding and retention of the topic.

In the classroom, that "action" might be the student participating in a demonstration of the "Tueller Drill," and online, that might mean following along with a video narrator as he demonstrates a certain skill or the student opening up an interactive "widget" and clicking around on a number of hotspots to learn more about a par-

ticular topic. It might also mean moving beyond the simple True/False and multiple-choice test type questions and instead forcing the student to interact with the test, such as identifying what he sees in a video, dragging and dropping sequence items into the proper order, clicking on the correct part of a firearm or dragging and dropping matching items that go together.

For our part, our newly minted online course contains dozens of these interactive widgets, embedded videos and more than 150 interactive questions contained in a "pool" of questions, so that even if a user fails a particular quiz, she'll be fed a new set of questions on her next attempt. It even contains a video narration on every single slide with the narrator effectively acting as the online student's very own personal instructor.

BLENDED LEARNING

So what's better — classroom training or online training? Well, the obvious answer is that both forms of knowledge transfer have their benefits, and blended learning might just be the answer that

we're looking for. Online training has the edge when it comes to knowledge retention, and it opens up this important training to the millions of Americans who are unable to fit a concealed carry class into their hectic schedules. Classroom training provides an important social aspect and allows the student to get some hands-on experience and trigger time with an experienced and patient instructor.

If you haven't had a chance to check out our online training, I think you'll be happily surprised by what you'll see. Whether you'd consider the course as a pre-study before you take a live class or if you've already taken a class and could use a refresher, my belief is that the result will be far more information retained than if you'd taken the single step of a traditional class.

Blended learning of classroom training and eLearning might just be the wave of the future, and the USCCA has just taken a mighty big step in the right direction.



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Darn it! My Secret is Out!

»I LEARNED A LONG TIME AGO not to let anything surprise me anymore, and believe me, in this line of work, that takes some practice. I hate to say I've seen it all, because as soon as I say it, I'm bound to be shocked by something else I've never laid eyes on previously, particularly when it comes to email responses from readers on hot-button topics.

I'm going to share one with you that came from a regular listener of the radio broadcast, but I'll have to set it up first so it makes some sense and you can put it into the proper context. A couple of months ago on *Armed American Radio* — the second week of March to be exact — I had scheduled Americans for Tax Reform founder Grover Norquist as a guest. Norquist was unable to make his appearance that night as he was stuck on an airplane and his PR guys notified us as soon as they realized he wasn't going to be able to arrive in time (literally while I was live on air). No problem ... it happens all of the time. Norquist was a stand-up guy and rescheduled immediately for the following weekend, March 15. I appreciated that, as press releases had already gone out and the simple truth is that not everyone is kind enough to do so.

As fate would have it, that Friday, just two days before Norquist's rescheduled appearance, Glenn Beck was speaking on his national radio program to a man by the name of Frank Gaffney. Gaffney is a long-time critic of Norquist whose accusations date back years. During that on-air discussion, Gaffney ran through those allegations, focusing (as he always does) on the Muslim Brotherhood and accusing Norquist of being in cahoots with them. There's not enough space here to go into it; suffice it to say, you can read it all online. During that on-air conversation, Glenn referenced that he had spoken to the NRA personally about Gaffney's claims and threatened that if Norquist were reelected to the board, he would leave the NRA. With the size of Beck's audience, the story took off nationally, garnering a ton of coverage.

I have to admit that it was a perfect hand-off! Considering that it was national news, I was able to use AAR to provide Norquist the opportunity to make his first comments in response to what was aired on Beck's show. That's what talk radio programs do!

Norquist was attacked on Beck's show by Gaffney and wasn't there to defend himself.

Beck used Gaffney's appearance on the show to take a position and threaten to leave the NRA, and because I allowed Norquist to defend himself on my show by asking him to comment, the response from those who hate Norquist was akin to finding out I have been a paid Bloomberg undercover turncoat this whole time. It was hard to pick just one, but take a look at my favorite:

Mr. Walters,

You are being taken by an Islamic radical who is not a genuine conservative working for liberty; he is a devout Sharia Muslim and promoter of terrorism — and of course, he will use taqiyya as Muslims are wont to do in promotion of their evil activities. He used a typical tact (sic) often used by the left and now Muslims who are now a part of the left: lie about and ridicule their opposition. (I am no fan of Glenn Beck or of Gaffney, but this time they are right.)

And by supporting Norquist, you are supporting the Islamic agenda. You are working at cross purposes to the Second Amendment and to the entire Constitution. Islam is a seditious religion that does not promote liberty but rather tyranny. And don't say you're not supporting Norquist or Islam, because you are. You're being played like a fool, as many are by Muslims, especially those inside the beltway. (The majority of politicians inside the beltway, including so-called conservatives, are well left of center. Of course they will not stand against Islam; they usually bend over backwards promoting it.)

In hour two, you filled the Muslim Brotherhood's prescription to promote their anti-liberty agenda, and you're too ignorant to realize this. Time to wise up, Mr. Walters, and learn the truth about Islam and those like Grover Norquist. I could barely listen to you promote this evil man, and you just allowed him to lie and slander Mr. Gaffney without challenge. (Neil McCabe spoke like a slobbering Grover Norquist sycophant — with no objectivity, repeating some of the talking points of the Huffington Post.) This sort of ignorance and foolishness is allowing Islamists to run wild in

America, from the highest seats of power to the local political establishment, promoting Islam and silencing those who stand in opposition.

P.S. You obviously are very ignorant of Islam and how the Islamists are operating in America, much as they are in Europe. Muslims can neither befriend nor marry those who are not Muslim, ergo Grover Norquist is a Muslim. Again it's time for you to wise up — learn the subject before you speak about it on your radio show or in print. Don't be a mouthpiece for the opposition. Yours and McCabe's failure to be informed about Islam and Norquist does not make me or anyone else who is informed a wacko.

Whew! Did you get all of that? So by virtue of the fact that I asked a pre-scheduled guest — a man I had never met nor spoken to before — a question and allowed him to respond in kind to major accusations made on another radio program, I am a radical Islamist sympathizer!

Darn it, the secret's out! Of course that's hogwash, as I am no more an Islamic sympathizer for asking a guest a question than I am a rock star when I speak to Ted Nugent. Unlike Glenn Beck, who became the subject of the news itself (Hmmmm! Perhaps by design, one might ask?) by siding with Gaffney prior to speaking to Norquist, I took no position on the accusation leveled at him and simply allowed him to reply. I simply don't know enough about Norquist nor do I have the investigative staff of Beck's. The position I did take was to mention I thought it was a mistake for Beck to leave the NRA when he and his followers are needed now more than ever.

Update: At the time this piece is going to print, Grover Norquist has voluntarily stepped aside from his duties as NRA board member while the NRA completes its investigations into the allegations made by Frank Gaffney on the Glenn Beck Program.



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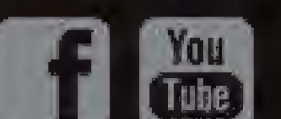
Designed specifically for carrying a firearm, CrossBreed® Gun Belts are made with top grain cowhide and lined with premium hard rolled leather. Each is hand buffed, burnished, and treated, resulting in a strong belt with flexibility and comfort for every day wear.

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